THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

ARRANGED, DIVIDED, AND BRIEFLY CHARACTERIZED

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

ACTS TO 2 CORINTHIANS

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ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW—
   1. Genesis
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   3. Leviticus
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   5. Deuteronomy
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   2. Judges
      Ruth
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      Second Book (*Kings*)
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THE NEW TESTAMENT

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2. THE ACTS
3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES—
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   2. Thessalonians (*First Epistle*, *Second Epistle*), Corinthians (*First Epistle*, *Second Epistle*), Hebrews, Timothy (*First Epistle*, *Second Epistle*), Titus
4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES—
   1. Peter
      First Epistle
      Second Epistle
   2. James
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      First Epistle
      Second Epistle
      Third Epistle
   4. Jude
5. REVELATION

PREFACE

AFTER an interruption which threatened a complete setting aside of the NUMERICAL BIBLE, as far as I at least could have personally to do with it, the Lord has graciously permitted me to see the second volume of the New Testament at last ready for what readers He may give interest in it. Realizing the imperfection that cleaves to all that is of man, I have yet no doubt that the value of the numerical structure to the interpretation of the word of God will be found here still by others as by myself. It has never (to me) failed to witness to the integrity, harmony, and perfection everywhere pervading this: the evidence of which will not fail to be found by those who care to look for it. As for the rest, it remains only to say that I have sought to make the outline of the divine truth in the Scriptures contained in this volume—mere outline as it must necessarily be—as full as space and ability permitted. Nor have I sought anywhere to hide my convictions upon any subject whatever that came fairly before me, but have taken my readers fully into my confidence, as the nature of my task demanded. "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully," is a direct command which has given me no liberty, where a prudent reserve might have commended my work to a much wider circle. Alas, for the distractions of Christendom! which show how far Great Babylon has thrown its shadow beyond itself. But God would use even this for blessing to those absolutely sincere before Him, and not willing to give up any of that truth, into *all* which His Spirit would fain guide us. The exercise necessitated cannot fail to be for more establishment and deeper apprehension of that about which there has been exercise; and to "prove all things" is everywhere needed in order to "hold fast that which is good." But Christians will find here no departure from the fundamentals of the common faith as expressed in the three great creeds which are a legacy from the early centuries.

Alas, that already we miss from them the clear ring of the gospel: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"!

The last volume of the New Testament is almost entirely in manuscript already.

It is due to Mr. Ridout, as well as to those who may miss the usual fulness of the references in the later epistles, to say that he is not responsible for these, having himself also been for some months laid aside from all work of this kind by the prostration of severe illness, from which he is now happily recovering, so that the next volume will show, as we trust, once more the marks of what has been to him so long a labor of love.

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, N. J., August 17th, 1901.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMERALS

The reason for the significance must be sought in previous volumes, especially in Appendix II. to the Volume on the Psalms.

ONE.

Soleness, singularity, uniqueness; solitariness, barrenness.
Sufficiency, power, independency, pride, rebellion.
Identity, unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, truth, knowledge.

(UNITY.)

Unity, at-oneness, harmony, congruity, integrity, righteousness, obedience, concord, peace.

(PRIMACY.)

Supremacy, headship, rule; beginning, cause, occasion, source, foundation, ground, plea.

(COMBINATIONS OF MEANINGS.)

Life, personality, will. Choice, election. Grace.
God, Almighty, Eternal, Jehovah, Father.

TWO.

(RELATION.)

Help, support, confirmation, assurance, competent testimony.
Seconding, preservation, deliverance, salvation. Service, ministry.
Addition, increase, growth; progress, movement, activity.
Attachment, love, desire, prayer. Association, partnership, fellowship.

(SECOND.)

Dependence, faith. Inferiority, lowliness, humiliation, subjection.

(DIFFERENCE.)

Diversity, contrast; contradiction, opposition, conflict, enmity.
Double-mindedness, duplicity, deceit.

(DIVISION.)

Separation, analysis, differentiation, discernment; judgment, wisdom; sight.
Decay, death, dissolution.
Christ, Second Person, God and Man, Second Man, Word of God, Witness, Saviour, Servant, Minister. Cross. Soul. Woman.

THREE

(THREE DIMENSIONS.)

Solidity; reality, realization, fulfilment, fulness; manifestation. Sanctuary; glory, praise. Name.

(THREE STRAIGHT LINES INCLOSE A SPACE.)

Setting apart for purpose; specialization, sanctification, holiness; transformation. Dwelling-place, possession, portion. Marriage. Ban.

(THIRD LINE OF A TRIANGLE RETURNS TO THE FIRST.)

Resurrection; return, revival, recovery; reproduction. Spirit.

FOUR.

Yieldingness, weakness; meekness, mercy. Failure, testing; experience; transitoriness, change.
Creature, earth, walk on earth, world.

FIVE.

God in government; capacity, responsibility, exercise, way and end; conditions.
Weak with the Strong; Man with God; Immanuel.

SIX.

Manifestation or fulness of evil. Work-day week; limit, discipline; mastery, overcoming.

SEVEN.

Completeness, perfection; rest.

EIGHT.

New in contrast with the Old.

TEN.

Simply a 5 by 2.

TWELVE.

The manifest rule of God.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

IN the New Testament Pentateuch, there is no question possible that the book of the Acts fills the Exodus place. It is the story of the going forth of the people of God from a servitude the "yoke" of which, as the apostle of the circumcision himself declares, neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (chap. xv. 10). To the conscience quickened by the entrance of divine light, what can be more unendurable than the bondage of law? And the Light had come into the world. Christ had swept away the things permitted for the hardness of men's hearts; He had drawn with absolute precision the line between right and wrong; He had followed it into the secret chambers of the heart, and condemned as adultery the lustful look, denounced causeless anger as subject to the judgment, the calling a brother "fool" as worthy of hell fire; He had required men to love their enemies, pray for those that cursed them, return good for evil, live a life which men have at large judged to be as impracticable as beautiful. Make all this into a legal system, and it is indeed an intolerable one. The apostle Paul has told us how the very prohibitions of the law stirred up within him the lust which it condemned, so, that "holy, just, and good" as the commandment was, when it came to him in the reality of what it was, the sin, of which he had been before so little conscious that it seemed as if it were dead, revived and *he* "died" (Rom. vii. 9). This is the powerlessness of law, and this is at the same time its strength: its powerlessness *is* its strength; for it is the impotence of man's own self-devised way (for all natural religion is law in some form) to meet God and stand before Him. The veil unrent before His face, the way into the holiest still unopened, the plain declaration that (upon that footing) no man can see Him and live,—all these unite to speak the hopelessness of confidence in human effort of any kind. None can rise up to the measure of divine requirement, nor can the holiness of God permit the modification of the requirement. The old covenant, then, must be done away, and the glorious new covenant of God's "I wills" must be substituted for that to him so fatal of "Thou shalt."

"There is," therefore, "verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God" (Heb. vii. 18, 19). Hagar, who "gendereth to bondage," must, according to the apostle's inspired "allegorizing" of

Abraham's history, be cast out of the house (Gal. iv. 30). "The law is not of faith," and the contradictory principles of grace and of works cannot subsist together (Gal. iii. 12; Rom. xi. 6).

But with Hagar Ishmael also must be cast out; and here we have to read, as the apostle also teaches us, the rejection of Israel nationally, cleaving to law and refusing grace, and Him in whom alone grace can be offered and is found. This is what we have in the book of Acts: the weaning time of Isaac, the child of the freewoman, the "mocking" of Ishmael, the setting aside of unbelieving Israel as involved in that of the legal covenant, to which with all the spirit of bondage that it breathes, they yet adhere. With this, as its necessary corollary, we find the gathering together of the children of God who were scattered abroad,—the widening of the publication of the gospel, first to Samaria, and then to the uncircumcised nations, the opening of the "mysteries" in the gospel given to Paul, the special features of the work among the Gentiles. The final portion shows Jewish enmity bringing the great apostle of the Gentiles to a Roman prison: a close in sorrow which we may find to have significance in relation to the Gentile work at large, and to be a prophecy of the failure of what we speak of (somewhat loosely perhaps) as the Christian dispensation.

Into the doctrines of Christianity the book of Acts does not enter largely: it is a history, and apart from what we have already seen, scarcely treats as we might have expected of the new truth which has come to gladden and bless and sanctify the redeemed. We have a certain development in connection with Paul's ministry which we shall have to trace, from forgiveness of sins to justification and a place in Christ, the Spirit being all through the witness to Christ glorified and the seal of the disciple. The Church as the House of God or the Body of Christ is only seen here by the help of what is given us elsewhere; it is rather seen here as a communion of believers in an exalted Saviour, expecting His return, and meanwhile enjoying the consciousness of the salvation He has wrought.

The main divisions of the book have been in some measure indicated:—

1. (Chaps. i.–vii.):—The beginning of the Church: the call of Israel alone.
2. (Chaps. viii.–xii.):—Israel rejecting, but the Church enlarging.
3. (Chaps. xiii.–xx.):—The Proclamation of the Mysteries.
4. (Chaps. xxi.–xxviii.):—Into the Roman prison.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–vii.)

The Beginning of the Church: the call of Israel alone.

Subdivision 1. (Chap. i. 1–11.)

The Foundation.

1 (1-3): The Living Lord.

1. THE [a] first account indeed did I make, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus [b] began both to do and teach, until the [c] day in which he was taken up, when he [d] by the Holy Spirit had

[a] *cf.* Lk. 1. 1-4.
[b] *cf.* Jno. 17. 4 with Jno. 20. 21. *cf.* Mk. 16. 20.
[c] Lk. 24. 50, 51. ver. 9. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 16.
[d] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16 with ch. 10. 38. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21-23.

NOTES.—Div. 1.

Israel has rejected her Lord and Saviour: the Son of God has come to His own, and His own have not received Him. Tested under law, they had been proved "ungodly and without strength;" the coming of Christ had now more completely tested them, with a more terrible result: the Cross had now manifested as to them that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God.

It is true that this was not the condition of Israel only. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;" and we have learned nothing right, if we have not learned to identify ourselves with the privileged nation, and to see in their condemnation the judgment passed upon the whole world. This we shall have put before us fully by the apostle of the Gentiles in that epistle in which he declares a salvation needed alike by all as being without difference guilty before God. But this is not what we have to do with here; here it is as yet Israel alone that is before us; Israel, over whom the heart of God is still yearning, and for whom, therefore, as a nation, there is to be a first offer of grace, if perhaps the demonstration of their guilt and danger in the crucifixion of the Son of God may work upon them to receive it. "Repentance and remission of sins" was indeed to be "preached among all nations," but "beginning at Jerusalem," (Luke xxiv. 47), and from thence, if even yet they would repent, the living streams were to flow forth.

Accordingly at the Cross itself there is heard the intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" words which Peter takes up in his address to the multitude upon the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple: "And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;" and thereupon he assures them that, if now they repented, the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, and He would send Jesus Christ to fulfil to them all that the prophets had foretold of blessing (chap. iii. 17–21).

With this offer and its results the first division mainly is taken up; the end being reached in the trial and stoning of Stephen, who fulfils his name in receiving the "crown" of martyrdom, and is, according to the Lord's parable the messenger of the unhappy people sent after Him, to say they will not have this Man to reign over them. Until this time there is no going out whatever to the Gentiles. Although the risen Saviour has declared that the apostles are to be His witnesses "in Samaria, and to the end of the earth," not even Samaria, though so near at hand, and having, in fact, upon one memorable occasion, heard, not without precious fruit, the gospel from His own lips, gets any further testimony. All seems in suspense while the issue of Israel's call is yet to be seen. A Gentile centurion has already proclaimed the Crucified to be the Son of God; yet we hear of no Gentile added to the Church; and this, though formed by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, has not displayed therefore its distinctive

given commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he [e]presented himself alive after he had suffered, with many sure proofs, being seen by them during [f]forty days, and [g]speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

[e] vers. 21, 22. cf. Jno. 20. 19, etc. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 4-8. [f] cf. Matt. 4. 2. [g] cf. Lk. 24. 25-27.

characteristics. It is a remnant of Israel merely, and has heard nothing apparently whatever of its own high calling. From this point it is that a notable change begins.

SUBD. 1.

It is striking that, while Luke's is one of the two only Gospels closing with the ascension of Christ, he yet should begin what is in some sense, as he declares, a continuation of his former work, with another account. The reason of this, however, is not hard to discover. In Matthew He has announced that upon that "Rock" which Peter had just confessed He would build His assembly (chap. xvi. 18). And He Himself, as Peter assures us, is the foundation upon which this "spiritual house" is built up (1 Pet. ii. 4–6). Resurrection it is that has marked out the Son of the Living God (Rom. i. 4). His work is there manifestly accomplished and accepted; that upon which all rests for us is finished, and here alone can there be an unchangeably secure foundation laid for any blessing. But the Church as the "spiritual house" is the House of God; and it is made so by the indwelling of the Spirit within it; while, if we think of it as the Body of Christ, it is by one Spirit that we are all baptized into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). This the Lord presently assures us, was at Pentecost: Pentecost then was the beginning of the Church, and the Spirit given at that time was the fruit of Christ's departure to the Father (John xvi. 7); and it is as there set at the right hand of God that He is made Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body (Eph. i. 20–23).

It is plain, then, why the story of the assembly as related here should have for its introduction the ascension of Christ. It was fitting that this should end the Gospel; it is as fitting that it should begin the history of the Acts: in both connections its place is perfect, yet it is neither from the Gospel nor the Acts that we are made to realize this. Scripture as a whole is the product of one Mind alone.

1. It is the writer of the Gospel of the Manhood who gives us here, distinctly as linked with it, the story of that which He has specially associated with Himself as Man. The body is that by which the spirit of man which is in him takes its part in the world and is able to express itself in a scene like this. The Body of Christ is in the same way the "epistle of Christ," the expression of the absent One who as Head guides and governs it. To be feet and hands and mouth for Christ, as representatives of Him, seems fittingly and naturally to explain our position in this respect, which the opening of the Acts may well confirm. "Acts of the *Apostles*" is the title given by the MSS., which is confirmed by writers as early as Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, while Luke himself might appear to furnish another. For he calls his Gospel a "first account" of things which "Jesus *began* both to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up." The "Acts" he leaves us to infer to be a second account, of things Jesus went on to do after His ascension, somewhat as Mark speaks of the disciples going forth and preaching everywhere, "the Lord (in heaven) working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Here in Luke it would be, not the Lord working *with*, but *in* and *through;* and this would be completely that which the members on earth of the Christ in heaven would seem to suggest.

A *company* like this the world had never seen before. It implies an intimate fellowship with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16), and a unity of loving obedience to His will, which, empowered by the Spirit of God, would be indeed an epistle of Christ upon the earth; and such truly was the Church at its commencement. They were a force among men which was recognized alike by

2 (4-8): His witnesses.

2. And being assembled together with them, he [h] charged them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but [i] wait for the promise of the Father, which, [saith he,] ye have heard from me. For [j] John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be [k] baptized with the Holy

h Lk. 24. 49.
i *cf.* vers. 13, 14. *cf.* Lk. 2. 25-29.
j *cf.* Jno. 1. 26-33. *cf* Matt. 3.

11. *k* ch. 2. 1-4; ch. 11. 15, 16; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.

enemies and friends. As they became known, indifference ceased regarding them; there remained but sympathy or opposition, friendship or bitter hatred. They experienced the truth of the Saviour's words, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." And, while persecution did not fail to follow, the word of God ran and was glorified; the light shone; the heavens through which Christ had gone were pouring out radiance through that open door.

Luke writes once more to his friend Theophilus, who, we notice, has lost his title of honor on the world's roll,—a sign, perhaps, of advance in honor on a better one; perhaps the world had promoted the "friend of God" after its fashion with such. At any rate, Luke was sure of Theophilus' continued interest in such matters as he cared to write about. In *him* Jesus had begun both to do and teach,—a beginning which would have a glorious ending and a sure one. He is not able to go on in the truth, for whom the world is not dropping off the more in proportion as he goes on with this; and such an one, we may surely believe, was he to whom Luke the evangelist,—must we not say, Luke's glorious Master also?—was able to pour out his heart.

Of that which Jesus goes on to do and teach, Luke devotes himself, as we have seen, to the activity, rather than the doctrine. It has never been the method of the Spirit to confide what He has to communicate to a single teacher. No one vessel could be found competent to hold all the truth;—a thing to be marked at all times, when the Spirit is communicating. Humility is better served, communion is more realized, God is more fully exalted, in the use of various instruments, not tied to any, working sovereignly as He will. But Luke has a very distinct line of his own, as, more or less, every inspired writer has. He is the historian of the Spirit's energy in a world of sin and of Satan's power manifested; —the historian, therefore, of a mighty conflict, the world side of that which in Ephesians is seen upon its heavenly side. Here it is the struggle to save men from his sway on earth; there it is to lay hold against all his wiles of our inheritance in heaven.

It is the commandment of the Lord to which all are subject here; He, as true and typal Man, speaking by the Holy Spirit upon Him to the apostles He had chosen; to whom as witnesses of His resurrection He shows Himself alive after His suffering with many sure proofs. For the resurrection, as the sign of His acceptance, and of ours in Him, is the basis of the whole gospel, and of our heavenly position, as well as of the Church; and thus the resurrection chapter closes the first epistle to the Corinthians, the epistle of Church fellowship and activity, the doctrinal counterpart of the Acts itself.

Again and again, therefore, during forty days the risen Lord is seen by them, and as no mere apparition, but freely speaking to them of the Kingdom of God, to the interests of which they were now devoted. This is the general term for that which meets the condition of a world away from God, which has thrown off allegiance to Him, and wandered in the tortuous labyrinths of its false wisdom and the misery of its self-will. For God being no longer in His place, all else is out of its place necessarily when that to which all is in relation has ceased to be.

Thus the news of the coming of the Kingdom of God is indeed gospel; and the faith of Jesus, as it prevails, establishes of necessity the Kingdom. The full rest of the soul is only gained when the apprehension of sovereign Love has subjected the will of man to entire acquiescence in its blessed ways.

2. It is not by the knowledge of His resurrection merely that they are qualified to bear testimony for their Lord. The promise of the Father is to be ful-

Spirit not many days hence. They therefore, who had come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at [l] this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said unto them, It is not for you to know [m] times and seasons which the Father hath placed under his own authority. But ye shall receive [n] power when the Holy Spirit hath come upon you, and ye shall be my [o] witnesses, both in [p] Jerusalem, and in all [q] Judea and [r] Samaria, and to the [s] end of the earth.

l cf. Lk. 24. 21. *cf.* Lk. 19. 11. *cf.* ch. 3. 19–21.
m cf. 1 Thes. 5. 1, etc. *cf.* Mk. 13. 32–37.
n cf. ch. 4. 33.
o ver. 22. *cf.* Jno. 15. 26, 27.
p cf. ch. 2. 14.
q cf. ch. 8. 1. *r cf.* ch. 8. 5. *s* ch. 13. 46, 47; *cf.* Col. 1. 23.

filled, and they are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit within a few days from that time. It is sorrowful enough, after all the pains that the Lord has taken to make known the true nature of the coming of the Spirit, and even in spite of the apostle's declaration that "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," that Christians should still be ignorant of the character of that which then took place,—should confound Person and influence, the Gift with the gifts! The Lord has fully shown us that it was the Spirit Himself who then would come in place of Him who was now going away: "another Comforter" or Advocate, to be with them, as Christ had been, but *in* them also, making their bodies by His Presence temples of God. As the Spirit of adoption He taught them to cry, "Abba, Father!" As dwelling in the Church, this became also the House and Temple of God; as united by Him to Christ, His Body. The various gifts are qualifications for various place in this, as its members.

It is not so much denied that such things are, as that it was ever otherwise than now, at least from Abraham, with whom by most the Church is thought to have begun. All that has taken place since is, for those who hold such views, merely an increase of light and power; the coming of the Spirit merely a strong term for a larger outpouring than heretofore; and such "a Pentecostal shower" should "precede every sermon." This treatment of Scripture evacuates it of its proper meaning. Its language becomes loose, indefinite, incapable of precise significance. We escape from this fog easily by giving the same credit to the statements of the word of God that we should to those of any honest man not given to exaggeration, nor liable to confusion of speech. However, this is not yet the place to discuss the doctrine of the Church, for the simple reason that we have not yet the scripture as to it, and the Church is born, like many another child of destiny, without the knowledge of its God-given dignity.

But we should notice that the Lord, after His resurrection, has acknowledged in His disciples brethren of His own, and that the "promise of the Father" of which He here speaks characterizes well the Spirit of adoption which is at hand. The children of God which have been scattered abroad are now to be gathered together, and this involves that they shall be known to themselves and one another. Baptism with the Holy Spirit, whatever else it may mean, is the introduction into this acknowledged family of God, and as the *Holy* Spirit, the introduction accomplished by it is no formality but a true and enduring change. John's baptism of water is only mentioned, as he himself mentioned it, to be put in contrast with the gift now to be given by the Son of God. It is a true initiation into a spiritual state, never to be confounded or mixed up with any baptism of water: there the line is clearly drawn by the Lord's own conduct as to the latter: "Jesus Himself *baptized not*, but His disciples" (John iv. 2).

Those gathered round Him now, as risen from the dead, are still, however, Jews, and with little ability to enter into that which the Lord is putting before them. We hear, at least of no question pointing in this direction. They have another, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The answer to this we can easily see now they were not prepared for; nor did it accord with the offer which was to be made through them to the nation, to be told the final result. "It is not for you," He says, "to know times and seasons which the Father has placed under His own authority." Yet, with reference to

3 (9-11): Ascending, but to return.

3. And having said these things, while they beheld, he was [t]taken up, and a [u]cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, as he was going, behold, [v]two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, [w]why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who hath been taken up from you into heaven, shall so [z]come in like manner as ye have seen him going into heaven.

cf. Lk. 24.5; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16. *x cf.* Matt. 24. 3; *cf.* Heb. 9. 28; *cf.* Tit. 2. 13; *cf.* Zech. 14. 4.

t ver. 2. *cf.* Eph. 4. 10. *u cf.* Ex. 13. 21. *cf.* Matt. 17. 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17. *cf.* Rev. 1. 7. *v cf.* Lk. 24. 4. *w cf.* Jno. 20. 17.

Israel in the days preceding her entrance into the blessings promised her, such times are not only given, but it was distinctly declared to the prophet of them that, while the vision was shut up and sealed to the time of the end, yet that then the wise shall understand (Dan. xii. 9–11). The Lord's words therefore are an intimation that they stood not in such relation to the coming blessing. And as they were, so are we still. A heavenly people, waiting to be caught up to heaven, "days and months, and times, and years" are not for those who are not of the world, but detached from the stream of the world's history. That which to the wise in Israel, in such a crisis as Daniel shows they are to pass through, will be of the greatest importance for them to know, would have been to Christians, through all the intervening centuries of their history, a knowledge which would have put far off from them the One for whom they wait. We still watch *because* we know not what hour our Lord doth come (Matt. xxiv. 42).

But if times and seasons were not for them to understand, there was a glorious testimony to be given, for which the Spirit's coming would empower them. They were to be His witnesses far and wide, even to the end of the earth; and of this testimony Jerusalem would be the beginning and the centre. How great a glory indeed the Light that arising out of Israel illumines already with its beams every heart that will receive it in! "A Light," says Simeon, "for revelation of the nations, and the Glory of Thy people Israel." But not as yet would Israel receive the message sent.

3. Now in open sight of all, He is taken up. The cloud that receives Him out of their sight is surely the "bright cloud" of the Transfiguration. It is the Man Christ Jesus welcomed by the Glory into which He is taken; and no vision of angels would be as fitting as is this. Nay, angels have here no place: we are made to think rather of the apostle's words, that being perfected, He was "saluted of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. v. 10). The Glory salutes Him here, now perfected; and His priestly office is that upon which depends all the outflow of divine grace with which the book is filled.

Upon earth the angels have their message of comfort: this Jesus is to return as He went up; the beginning and end of the day of atonement are here brought together. As Priest He departs, and as Priest He will return to bless the people of Israel. As yet it is of Israel that they are specially thinking; and His coming for the Church is not revealed. The disciples are in heart an Israelitish remnant still, and the revelation of the purposes of God proceeds only gradually. But heaven is where He is; and the angels' message comforts the home-sickness of their hearts as they see Him depart. Up, then! to serve Him in His absence. Not in contemplation merely, but in active energy of devoted labor will they be in fellowship with Him, who even upon the throne of heaven is serving still.

Subd. 2.

We have now the inroad that Satan has made upon their ranks repaired, and Matthias substituted for Judas in the number of the twelve apostles. Dreadful was the apostasy of one in such a position: and it could not be permitted that men should have the least apparent cause to blaspheme on this account; it must be shown that sin in its extremest manifestation had not yet exceeded the bounds ordained by God for it;—that in its worst uprising He was Master still.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 12–26.)

Matthias added to the Eleven Apostles.

1 (12-14): A new beginning.

1. THEN they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a [y]sabbath day's journey off. And when they entered it, they went up to the [z]upper room where were staying both [a]Peter and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James [the son] of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas [the brother] of James. These all continued with one accord in [b]prayer, with the [c]women, and [d]Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his [e]brethren.

2 (15-22): The guidance of Scripture.

2. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, (the multitude of names was about a [f]hundred and twenty of those together) and said, Brethren, it was necessary that the [g]Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit forespake by the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who became [h]guide to those who took Jesus: for he had been [i]numbered amongst us, and

y cf. Jno.11. 18.
z cf. Jno.20. 19.
cf. ch. 20.8.
a cf. Matt. 10. 2-4.
cf. Mk.3.16 -19.
*cf.*Lk.6.14 16.
b cf. ch. 6. 4.
*cf.*ch.16.16.
*cf.*ch.20.36.
c cf. Lk. 8.2, 3.
d cf. Jno.19. 26, 27.
e ctr. Jno.7. 5.
*f ctr.*ch.2.41.
g cf. Jno.17. 12.
h Jno. 18. 2, 3.
i cf. Jno. 6. 70, 71.

1. They return from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem: Olivet is their spring of power; Jerusalem the sphere of their ministry: they break no sabbath-rest by journeying between the two. Olivet is their Gilgal, for their new conquest of the land; but they are a small company for so great a work, and realize their weakness. Gathering in the upper room where the eleven are staying, they continue with one accord in prayer, waiting for the fulfilment of the promise made. This conscious weakness is a main element of strength. The work being so entirely beyond them, they are delivered from the necessity of calculating their own resources, and are left to the unobstructed view of God as their sole argument and their sufficient resource.

Mary the mother of Jesus is seen here for the last time in Scripture. She takes her place simply with the rest, humbled, no doubt, rather than exalted by God's grace towards her. What a grief it would have been to her to have known the place in which an apostate church would set her in the time to come! She is neither prayed to, nor even leads in prayer, but remains as in the beginning "the handmaid of the Lord," and with this passes out of the history. In the doctrine of the epistles she has no place, and is never mentioned. Blessed and honored she is, and always will be; by none so dishonored as by those who would force her into a place impossible for a creature, that of a Pagan goddess rather than a Christian saint.

2. We see now the authority of Scripture over these disciples of the Lord Jesus, in which they are true followers of their Master. We have traced His ways in the Gospels, and know how fully the principle that "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" was acted upon by Him. Scripture that "cannot be broken" had for Him, therefore, all the authority of unalterable truth. "But how, then should Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" He gives as a convincing reason for not taking Himself out of the hands of those who came to seize Him. On the Cross, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He saith, I thirst." Twice over He speaks of the course and end of Judas as needful "that Scripture might be fulfilled." Peter, therefore, does but follow his Lord, when now, standing up amongst the brethren, he declares that "it was necessary that the Scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became guide to those who took Jesus." How blessed to realize the control of the Word of God in the darkest events, as in those most evidently displaying the

had obtained his lot in this [j] ministry. Now this man purchased a [k] field with the wages of iniquity, and [l] falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers in Jerusalem, so that that field is called in their dialect, Aceldama, that is, the field of [m] blood. For it is [n] written in the book of Psalms, Let his camp* be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his office let another take. Wherefore of the men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the [o] baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up from us, there must one be with us a [p] witness of his resurrection.

3 (23-26): The lot manifests.

3. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they [q] prayed and said, Thou, Lord, who [r] knowest the hearts

*Or, habitation.

[j] *cf.* Matt. 10. 5.
cf. Matt. 7. 22, 23.
[k] *cf.* Matt. 27. 5-8.
[l] *cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 23.
[m] *cf.* Matt. 21. 38, 39.
cf. 1 Ki. 21. 19.
cf. Rev. 14. 17-20.
[n] Ps. 69. 25. Ps. 109. 8.
[o] *cf.* Jno. 15. 27.
cf. ch. 13. 24.
[p] ver. 8. ch. 2. 32. ch. 4. 33.
cf. 1 Cor. 15. 3-8.
[q] ver. 14. ch. 6. 6. ch. 13. 3.
[r] *cf.* Jno. 6. 70 with Jno. 13. 18.
cf. 1 Sa. 16. 7.

signs of His handiwork! How dark they would be, if we had not in this way the assurance of His perfect oversight of every circumstance! But the Cross is, above all, this assurance, as the speaker here will presently point out to us. What a blaze of prophetic light is concentrated upon it! and how the worst evil the world ever saw is there gloriously overruled to be the greatest good! And what is true of this is true of every evil that has stained man's history: "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He will restrain."

So, then, with Judas, whose terrible descent is spoken of here, from his reception of the lot of his apostleship to his suicide in the field of blood, which he had purchased with the price of his iniquity. The apparently discordant accounts as to this purchase have been reconciled in a manner well-known and probable enough. Begun by the traitor, we have only to suppose it closed by the leaders of the people; Judas returning to it to hang himself in his despair, as Matthew relates; the judgment of God ensuing, as related here. That the character of the purchase-money should combine with the horror of his death to give its name of Aceldama to the potter's field, is in no wise difficult to understand.

Peter in his quotation connects two psalms (lxix. 25; cix. 8); the first fulfilled in the judgment at which his own hands had doubly wrought, the second as defining the duty which now pressed upon them. The office which he has shamed and cast aside is not to be left vacant to bear witness of the enemy's victory. All has been provided for,—all has been specified beforehand in the prescient wisdom of God, which cannot be taken by surprise or overmatched by Satan's subtlety or power. Nay, the Word is shown by his apparent success only the more fully master in all circumstances. It lies with them now to see filled up their broken ranks,—not by the appointment of a fresh apostle, for which plainly they have no authority, but by choosing out from among themselves those who had the necessary qualifications for one who was to be a witness of that wondrous life which had shone out among men, and then referring to the Lord Himself to determine which of these was according to His mind.

3. Scripture had settled for them what His mind was as to the place being filled; for the determining of the individual there was the lot, used so often in Israel for a matter like this. They had even the scripture for this, that, if "the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Pro. xvi. 33). They had no reason to doubt, therefore, that they would have His guidance

of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take the lot of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside, to go to his [s] own place. And they gave [t] lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

[s] *cf.* Jno. 17. 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 11, 15.

[t] Prov. 16. 33. *cf.* Gal. 1. 1, 12, 15. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. ii.)

The Promise of the Spirit fulfilled.

1 (1-4): Power.

1. AND when the [u] day of Pentecost was now accomplishing, they were all [v] together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty [w] rushing wind, and filled all the house where

[u] ch. 20. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 8. Ex. 34. 22. Lev. 23. 15-21. Num. 28. 26. Deut. 16. 9-12.

[v] ch. 1. 14. ver. 46.

[w] *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4; *cf.* Ezek. 37. 9 with Jno. 3. 8.

in acting on such an assurance; the Spirit had not yet come; and this, which some have taken to cast doubt upon the issue, and to dispute Matthias' right to the apostleship, they had no ground for believing to be a cause for delay when Scripture was thus clear. They acted in obedience, not in self-confidence; we never find their act disputed afterwards, and we have surely no right to dispute it now. It would be a totally different thing to imitate their conduct, now that the Spirit of God is come.

It is true that we have nothing of Matthias afterwards; but the same could be said of most of the apostles; nor of the fancied substitution of Paul for him at a later time have we any proof whatever. We have no reason for believing Matthias to have been other than his name imports, "the gift of the Lord" to them, according to their faith; and it is a happy thing to see faith acting in them in such simplicity and confidence, the word of God being its justification as always,—in this case before the Spirit has come. When He comes, it will not be to render us less subject to the Word, but on the contrary, to give us the fulness of it, even of the Old Testament; and the new dispensation which is now being introduced, with all its higher blessing, will confirm the old.

SUBD. 3.

The fulfilment of the promise is not long delayed, and we come now to the real commencement of the Church of God on earth. In saying this it must be remembered we are simply using the familiar word, which has so long retained its place that it would be now almost affectation to change it. Every one knows that the strictly accurate term is the "assembly," and that this also needs to be further defined as the assembly which is Christ's Body, or we shall fall into confusion. And this is the good of adhering to the common phraseology, negative enough in character to receive meaning from Scripture, but which, understood in this way, may become as definite as we can desire. The word "Church" in itself means only something belonging to the Lord, and so may apply to an assembly or a building, as in fact, people apply it. The Scripture-word "assembly" cannot be confounded in this fashion, but yet in itself would not distinguish the Jewish "assembly in the wilderness" from the Christian one so widely different, or even that heathen assembly which the town-clerk at Ephesus dismissed (chap. xix. 41). The word "Church" has the advantage that it does not really occur in Scripture; so that in using it invariably for the Christian assembly we can make it definite without any confusing with a scriptural word. Thus it will be easily understood if we use it here.

As already said, for the *doctrine* of the Church we need not look in the Acts. We have to go further now, and say, that for the doctrine of the Spirit we must not look in the Acts. It is important to recognize this, that we may retain the truth of the doctrine. In the Acts we shall not find "sealing," "anointing," or the "earnest" of the Spirit, or any terms equivalent with these. Of the

they were sitting. And there appeared unto them divided [x]tongues, as of [y]fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all [z]filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to [a]speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

x *cf.* Matt.3. 16. vers. 4, 32.
y *cf.* Jer.23. 29.
z *cf.*1Cor.12. 13 with ch. 1. 5, 8.
cf. ch. 4. 31. a *cf.* Mk. 16. 17; *cf.* ch. 19. 5, 6.

baptism with the Spirit we do hear, but without the help of Corinthians should not be able to understand it. On the other hand, of the Spirit being poured out, coming and falling upon men we hear in the Old Testament, as well as in the book before us. These things have been urged in various interests, and we must not ignore them: Scripture is as perfect in its form as in its matter, and it is only by strict attention to such things as these that we honor its perfection and obtain its deepest secrets. The Spirit is also spoken of as given and received; we have the "gift" of the Spirit, as elsewhere the "gifts."

Now the absence of certain terms which speak of the Spirit's inward operation is not to be wondered at in what is an historical account. As the public Witness to Christ, it is natural that the outward manifestations should be dwelt upon, rather than the inward, more really important though these last might be. Thus also the gift of tongues is specially noticed. When the Spirit fell or came upon men in the Old Testament times, it was seen similarly in works of power put forth; and the coming upon men speaks naturally of enduement with power. Of the work in the heart no spectator could be witness, save as this showed itself in fruit in the life in due season. And this does not lack in what is before us now, as is most evident; but it does not give us insight into the character of the Spirit's outpouring seen at Pentecost.

It is to the Gospel of John that we must turn, in fact, to know the real significance of the Pentecostal gift; although, as we have seen in going through this, even John does not speak of the Church. That it is the Spirit Himself who comes, the Lord there makes very plain to us; but the effect as declared is the perfecting of the truth and of the individual life; the circle into which you are brought by it is that of the acknowledged family, or, as Paul would say, the sons. The Spirit is the "Spirit of adoption"; the "gift" of the Spirit is to individuals; and, while producing necessary oneness of mind and heart, does not in any other way seem to imply the formation of a "body."

Yet that it was the baptism of the Spirit that was received at Pentecost, does not admit of question; and "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Thus the Church, the Body of Christ, came into being,—a body such as never had existed before. It was not proclaimed at its birth, however, nor for a good while afterwards. It was Christ that was proclaimed,—Christ come into the world, crucified by men, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, ascended up to God, and now Lord and Christ, a Prince and Saviour, to give remission of sins. The present revelation opens gradually, developing out of Old Testament Scripture fulfilled, and as a message also to the people of the Old Testament; and only as it is seen that Israel will still refuse the grace of God, is there a widening of the sphere of the proclamation, and new characters begin to be assumed by the assembly. The present division does not go beyond the first form of the message.

1. Pentecost is named from its connection with the Sheaf of Firstfruits, being the fiftieth day from this which speaks of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Upon this day two loaves of firstfruits, the beginning of the harvest, were offered to God. Their typical application is shown very clearly by the fact that they are baken with leaven, and therefore can represent nothing but men in that condition to which the fall has brought them, although the action of the leaven has been stopped by the fire,—that is, the holiness of God which has its effect in self-judgment. They are a "new meal-offering to the Lord," the fruit of, and in character akin to that "corn of wheat" which, that it might not abide alone, fell into the ground and died (John xii. 24); the presence of the leaven being

2 (5-13): Strange yet familiar utterances.

2. And there were [b]dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, reverent men, from every nation of those under heaven. Now this rumor* having come abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because each one heard them speak in his [c]own dialect. And they were

[b] *cf.* Is. 2. 3. *cf.* Is.49.21, 22.

[c] *ctr.* Gen. 11. 1-9. *cf.* Jno. 19 19. 20 with ch. 1. 8. *cf.*1 Cor.14. 11, etc.

* R. V. with many reads, "when this sound was heard," but this is unnatural, and not required by the original.

met by a sin-offering, which is followed by two lambs for a peace-offering, with seven lambs, a bullock, and two rams, for a burnt-offering. There is adequate witness to peace accomplished, with a full realization of acceptance with God,—the work of Christ in its completeness for the soul. This, of course, does not give the Church in its unique character as that, but rather in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel which began with it; consequently, all the more in the character in which, in fact, we see it in the Acts. The "feast of weeks," as they called it, fulfils its typical significance, as Passover and the sheaf of first-fruits had fulfilled theirs.

Pentecost finds the disciples gathered once more together. In those days of expectancy, it seems to have been habitual with them, and not as if any premonition of what was to take place had brought them at this time. But suddenly there comes from heaven a sound rousing them all to instant attention. It is like that of a powerful sustained breathing: so I think the words should be understood; it is confessedly "blowing" or "breathing" rather than "wind" as in the ordinary versions; and the latter of these two words should have the preference. It is not a storm that can furnish us with the symbols here; and in consistency with this, "rushing" is better replaced with "sustained." The simple force is "carried on"; it is not intermittent, as breathing might otherwise be taken to be. The idea suggested is that of inspiring, animating agency, though beyond human,—a heavenly power; not fitful or (as we say) impulsive, but lifting and bearing on with divine energy. It is the "power from on high," which the Lord promised, that has manifested itself; and, as the savor of the ointment once poured upon Him at that time filled the house, so now the house is filled with that which is poured out upon those whom divine grace has identified with Christ risen and gone up to God. Upon Him when in the world the Spirit had come to abide, the testimony to Him who was not of the world; so now upon those not of the world, because chosen by Him out of it, yet sent into it as His representatives, the Spirit comes to abide. Upon Him it was the seal of His perfection; upon them it is the seal of their perfection in Him.

The sound is not alone; a light as of fire appears in the form of tongues parting themselves, which rest upon each one there; and they all, filled with the Spirit, begin to speak in the diverse languages into which sin has divided the tongues of men. Grace is pursuing man with its testimony wherever his sin has carried him; as a consuming fire to his sin, but as light for his darkness, and in love which testifies by those who, themselves once the servants of sin, now speak with tongues enfranchised and given utterance by the Holy Spirit.

For the Spirit in man, not occasionally merely, nor, as one may say, officially, but characteristically and abidingly, so that it may be pressed as a part of one's responsibility to "be filled with the Spirit," (Eph. v. 18,) is indeed the perfect witnesss of how grace has come in for us, and therefore of the value before God of Christ's precious work. This is what we have insisted on in the Acts, rather than the doctrine—any doctrine—of the Church of God. This is the key to the missionary activity which so pervades it, as the coming into the realization of it from out of legal shadow makes it the New Testament Exodus. The height of Christian position we must wait for in Paul; for to him is the administration of the mystery committed.

2. The great word, as we see now, is testimony. The gift of tongues is prominent from the first; and this it is that attracts the multitude. It was indeed a

all amazed and wondered, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak [d]Galileans? and how hear we them, each in our own dialect in which we were born? [e]Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, both Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, both Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya beside Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speak in our tongues the [f]great things of God. And they were all [g]amazed and in perplexity, saying one to another, What may this be? But others, mocking, said, They are full of new [h]wine.

3 (14 36): The proclamation of Christ risen and glorified.

3. But [i]Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spake out to them, Men of Judea and inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these are not full* of wine, as ye suppose, for it is (but) the [j]third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken through the prophet [k]Joel: And it shall be in the [l]last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon [m]all flesh: and your

* Drunken.

d ch. 1. 11. *cf.* ch. 4.13.
e cf. Rev.5.9. *cf.* Rev.7.9.
f cf. ch.10.36–42.
g ver. 7. *cf.* ver. 43.
h cf. ch. 17. 32. *cf.*ch.26.24, 25. *cf.* Eph. 5. 18.
i cf. ch.3.12. *cf.* ch. 10. 5. *cfr.*Jno.18. 25–27. *cf.*Matt.16. 19.
*j cf.*1 Thess. 5. 7. *cf.* Eccl.10. 16, 17.
k Joel 2. 28–32. *cf.*Is. 32.15. *cf.*Ezek.39. 29. *cf.*Zech.12. 10.
l cf. Is. 2. 2. *cf.*Num.24. 14–25.
m cf. Is. 40. 5; *cf.* Jer. 31. 33, 34; *cf.* Is. 54. 13.

new thing in Israel, and its significance is at once manifest. Tongues were not needed for Jews in Palestine. The gift said at once, "Here is something to go forth." The scattering of the Jews, the privileged possessors of a revelation from God, was in His providence a preparation for the evangelization of the nations, and had, as we find abundantly in the Acts itself, been the scattering of seed widely among them. The Hellenistic Jews, with whom we shall soon be brought in contact, had taken up with some earnestness, if with less intelligence, the questions arising from their necessary relations with the paganism around. But, although there were thus many proselytes, yet there could not be said to exist any true missionary spirit, and the temper of the stricter Jews towards those who turned to them from the idolatry on all sides was not encouraging. Now had come the breath of change; and a new message must come with the new spirit. God was claiming His creatures, far as they might have wandered from Him; the miraculous gift was at once a trumpet to call the mass together, and a means of reaching personally all who should come.

There is no need for noticing the strange and differing versions that have been given by interpreters of what, though a miracle, is so simple a fact. It is plain that this crowd of people of many languages heard these men who were evidently Galileans speaking in these tongues. The miracle, as one of old remarked, was with those that spoke, not with those that heard; and therefore they were real languages the speakers used. Not even the "great things of God" that they heard them utter seem to have made such an impression upon the multitude, as this wonder of their use of unfamiliar speech. The Jews, unacquainted with these dialects, mocked the disciples as men who were drunken with new wine; but the rest marvelled.

3. It is specially to these uncomprehending ones, men of Judea and inhabitants of Jerusalem, that Peter, standing up with the eleven, addresses himself in explanation. They were, in fact, the guilty ones to whom yet, first of all, the gospel was to be preached. He gravely remonstrates against their groundless thought, of men being drunk so early in the day. The third hour of the day was that of the daily sacrifice, the custom prevailing being to abstain from food and drink, specially upon the feast-days, until this was offered. This is only a means, however, of gaining the hearing that he seeks: for explanation of what

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; moreover upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen will I pour out of my Spirit in those days, and they shall [n]prophesy. And I will show [o]wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the [p]great and glorious day of [the] Lord come. And it shall be that [q]whosoever shall call on the name of [the] Lord shall be saved. Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the [r]Nazarene, a man [s]pointed out of God to you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God wrought by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves [t]know: him, delivered by the determinate [u]counsel and foreknowl-

n cf. ch. 10. 44-46. *cf.* ch. 11. 28. *cf.* ch. 21. 9, 10.
o cf. Matt. 24. 29. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12-17.
p cf. 1 Thess. 5. 2. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 2-12. *cf.* Is. 13. 9-11. *cf.* Mal. 3. 2 with Mal. 4. 1 3. *ctr.* Rev. 3. 10.
q Rom. 10. 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2.
r cf. ch. 3. 6.
s cf. Matt. 3. 17 with ch. 10. 38; *cf.* Jno. 3. 2; *cf.* Jno. 5. 36.
t cf. Jno. 11. 47. *cf.* Jno. 12. 37-40.
u cf. Matt. 26. 24; *cf.* ch. 4. 28; *cf.* ch. 13. 27.

was taking place he refers them to their own scriptures. Joel had spoken of an outpouring of the Spirit in the last days which would affect young and old, men and women, after this manner. The apostle cannot mean indeed that this is the proper fulfilment of this prophecy, which speaks definitely of what shall take place after Israel's deliverance, when Jehovah should be openly dwelling in the midst of her, as now too surely He was not. But what if already these things which they were witness of were the premonitory signs of the incoming of those last days? We have only to remember that the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel had been a matter of enquiry on the part of the disciples with their risen Lord, and that He had definitely refused them satisfaction. Peter could not then say that the days of Joel were upon them. Yet he could warn them that such times were coming, which, with all their blessing, involved antecedently the "great and glorious day of the Lord," which for man's sin would not be light for all, but might be darkness (Amos v. 18). And he reminds them of the darkening of sun and moon that would precede it: what if already the things they witnessed might be signs of this great day? By and by we shall find a definite promise given that, if there were nationally repentance and the reception of Him whom they had crucified, He would return, and bring in that time. Plainly, then, as far as Peter knew, it might not be far away; and it was in the mind of God that Israel should thus have the offer of all that He had promised, without any drawback to the mercy so declared.

But Joel had added the necessary condition of salvation in the trial of those days:—a condition which could hardly be called one indeed, so naturally would it be the resource in trial to "call upon the Name of the Lord," (that is, "of Jehovah.") Yet even here, alas, might the unbelief of man make this a stumbling-block over which to fall and perish: for, in fact, Jehovah had come to them already, and they had rejected Him!

From this point, then, Peter begins to preach to them Jesus. He does not shun the title of Nazarene which was such an offence to them. Had not God borne witness to Him by mighty works and signs, which He wrought by Him in their very midst? Could they deny it?—an unbribed witness, surely.

What then had been the issue? They, the men of law, had used the hands of lawless men—of the Gentiles, to crucify and slay Him. That might seem, at least, the effectual disproof of His claims; nay, nothing had been accomplished but what had its place in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God by which He had been delivered up; all man's attempts would indeed have been futile, apart from this!

Spite of the Cross, God had shown His estimate of Him by resurrection from the dead. The Firstfruits from the dead, He had broken bands which yet had

edge of God, ye, by the hands of [v]lawless men, have crucified and slain. Whom God hath [w]raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not [x]possible that he should be held by it. For [y]David saith regarding him, I saw the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, that I should not be [z]moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my [a]tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall dwell* in [b]hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in [c]hades; thou wilt not suffer thy pious one to see [d]corruption. Thou hast made known to me the paths of [e]life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy counte-

*Literally, "tabernacle."

v cf. Jno.19. 11-16. *cf.* ch. 3.13, 14. *w cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 4. *cf.* Rom. 4. 25. *cf.*Rom.6.4. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21. *x cf.* Lk. 24. 5, 6. *cf.*John 10. 18. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18. *y* Ps. 16. 8-11. *cf.*ch.13.34. *z cf.* Is.50. 8, 9.

cf. Ps. 40. 13-17. *a cf.* Ps. 40. 1-3; *cf.* Heb. 2. 12. *b cf.* Jno. 16. 20-22; *cf.* Rom. 4. 18. *c* ver. 31; *cf.* Ps. 30. 3; *cf.* Ps. 102. 23-28; *cf.* Ps. 21. 1-4. *d* ch. 13. 35; *ctr.* Gen. 3. 19; *ctr.* Job 7. 9; *ctr.* I Cor. 15. 42. *e cf.* Rom. 6. 9; *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.

released no one besides after this manner. Others had been indeed raised up, but at last to return again and moulder in the dust to which man is sentenced. Not so with Him: it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Peter cites their scriptures in proof of this; and as sufficient witness, David, of whose line Messiah was to come: in the sixteenth psalm, David, though speaking in the first person, speaks evidently of Another than himself, who, perfect in a perfect pathway, Jehovah always before Him, always therefore for Him, gave unwavering steadfastness to all His steps. It was a pathway of life, therefore, even though it led through death; in which His flesh dwelt in confident hope, that He would not abandon His soul to hades, nor suffer piety such as His to see corruption. Beyond, the face of God was the brightness before Him. Of David himself certainly, all this could not be said. Not to him could this perfection be ascribed; and his monument amongst them showed him to have seen corruption, like all others. Not of himself, then, did he speak; and there was but One of whom it could be spoken. As a prophet he looked forward to Him whom God had sworn, as the fruit of his loins, to set upon his throne, King of the final Kingdom; final, because perfect, as necessary in the perfection which He manifests here.

But David's throne, would the Jew have argued, where is David's throne today? Did He take it? Is He filling it,—the Nazarene? And Peter could never have replied, as so many since have done for him, that the throne of heaven was, as the greater, inclusive of the less! No, his argument is a very different one. He has been in death, as this perfect One was to be; He has come up out of it, His flesh even not having seen corruption. That God has raised Him up, all the disciples there were witnesses. But more, the Spirit with its tongues of fire was His witness. "Being by the right hand of God exalted," says the apostle, "and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which ye now see and hear."

But that is not the argument: he is coming to it; and again he draws from David's arsenal. The weapon is one with which the Lord has before met and silenced the scribes; now it is to do the happier work of bringing the unbelieving to the faith of the gospel. David has shown, he would let them know, that there was to be for that Son whom he owns to be his Lord, a time of waiting for the Kingdom, with enemies opposing. He shows also that this waiting time would be while He was personally exalted at the right hand of God. "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes the footstool for Thy feet." Thus the pause before the taking of David's throne is itself a proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, instead of being an argument against it; and David himself it is who testifies to this.

Thus His enemies are to be put down, and those who call upon Jehovah's

nance. Brethren, I may speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both [f]dead and buried, and his monument is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a [g]prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that of the [h]fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne, he, [i]seeing (this) before, spake of the [j]resurrection of Christ, that he was not left in hades, neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are [k]witnesses. Therefore, being by* the right hand of God [l]exalted, and having received from the Father the [m]promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath [n]poured out this which *ye* behold and hear. For [o]David hath not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, [p]The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my [q]right hand until I put thy foes for the [r]footstool of thy feet. Therefore let all the [s]house of Israel know assuredly that God hath [t]made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

4 (37-40): Mercy for Israel yet.

4. Now, when they heard this, they were [u]pricked in heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Brethren, [v]what shall we do? And Peter said unto

f ch. 13. 36. 1 Ki. 2. 1, 10. *cf.* Neh. 3. 16. *cf.* Zech. 1. 5.
g *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 2. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 21. *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, etc. with 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.
h *cf.* Ps. 89. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 12-17. *cf.* Rom. 1. 3. *cf.* Ps. 132. 11.
i *cf.* Ps. 72. 1, 17, 20.
j *cf.* Ps. 40. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 110. 1.
k ch. 4. 33.
l *cf.* ch. 3. 13. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
m *cf.* ch. 1. 4 with Jno. 14. 16, 17, 26.
n ver. 17. *cf.* Tit. 3. 5, 6.
o *cf.* Prov. 30. 4.

* Or, "at."

cf. Jno. 3. 13. *p* Ps. 110. 1. *q cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Eph. 1. 20, 21. *r cf.* Heb. 2. 8, 9; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 25-28. *s* ver. 22; *cf.* ch. 3. 25, 26; *cf.* ch. 13. 26, 46. *t cf.* Ps. 45. 3-8; *cf.* Is. 53. 12. *u cf.* Gen. 42. 21; *cf.* Zech. 12. 10; *ctr.* ch. 7. 54. *v cf.* Lk. 3. 10-14; *cf.* ch. 22. 10. *cf.* ch. 16. 30, 31.

Name and find salvation in the last days must accept as Saviour Him whom Israel has rejected: for, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly," concludes the apostle, "that God has made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

4. The proof is conclusive, and the arrow of conviction is winged by the Spirit to the hearts of the listeners there. "Brethren," they cry out in alarm, "what shall we do?" And the grace that meets them is full and immediate. Let them in true repentance give up their sinful opposition to the Christ of God, and be baptized, each one, in dependence on the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and they should themselves receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the promise was to them and to their children, and to those afar off, even as many as the Lord (Jehovah) their God should call. But we must look at this more particularly.

In the Lord's commission to His disciples, as we have it in Luke's Gospel, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in the Name of the risen Christ to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This is accordingly what we find here,—repentance and remission of sins; though with an addition which has to be taken into account.

The Name of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed by the apostle to the sinners of Jerusalem; faith in that Name, if real, will of necessity produce repentance in the hearts of His rejectors hitherto. What a discovery of the state of man is the cross which he has given to the Christ of God! "Pricked in the heart" they may well be; but the apostle declares the mercy of God as pledging itself to those who, undoing their former rejection, take their place now as loyal subjects of the Crucified One. As the open sign of this, they must be "baptized in dependence on the Name of Jesus Christ:" baptism being the authoritative way of discipling (Matt. xxviii. 19), and His Kingdom being a Kingdom of truth (Jno. xviii. 37). Peter is using thus the two keys of the Kingdom (Matt. xvi. 19; *see the notes*).

them, [w]Repent, and be [x]baptized, each one of you, in dependence on* the name of Jesus Christ, for the [y]remission of sins, and ye shall receive the [z]gift of the Holy Spirit. For the [a]promise is for you and for your [b]children, and for all who are [c]afar off, as many as [the]

*It is not "in" the name, as generally translated, but "on" (ἐπὶ). One may say, "on account of," but it is feeble, and the word is used as given above. The Name of Christ gives character and motive to the baptism.

3, 4. *z cf.* ch. 5. 32; *cf.* ch. 10. 44, 45; *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *a cf.* vers. 17, etc; *cf.* ch. 19. 2- 6. *b cf.* Is. 54. 13; *cf.* ch. 16. 31. *c cf.* ch. 11. 15–18; *cf.* ch. 1. 8; *cf.* Is. 49. 1.

w Lk. 24.47. ch. 3. 19. ch. 20. 21. *cf.* Ps.51.3,5.
x cf. Matt. 28. 19. *cf.*ch.22.16. *cf.*Gal.3.27, 28.
*y cf.*Jno. 20. 23. *cf.*Rom.10. 9. *cf.* Rom. 6.

The connection of baptism with the remission of sins is a difficulty with many. It has been so much abused in the interests of sacramentalism, that it is no wonder if the very allowance of *any* connection should be abhorrent to those who, rightly refusing the mediatorship of sinful men between the soul and God, identify such a thought with any connection of the kind. But it is not faith to be afraid of Scripture; and, in some sense, Scripture *does* make baptism, not a prerequisite to the washing away of sins, but the actual doing of this. If Peter here bids his hearers be baptized for the remission of sins, Ananias clinches the two things together in his words to Saul of Tarsus: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the Lord." It is not the place yet to examine this particularly, but it cannot fairly be denied that the washing away of sins of which he speaks is put as the effect of baptism. If we are to meet Romanism effectually, we must frankly own the truth that is in it. It is not possible to maintain the ground that here a remission of sins *by men* is not intended. Did not the Lord, in fact, say to His disciples, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them"? He certainly did. To be able to illustrate this by the example of baptism cannot surely endanger the gospel with those who know it. Nor can any limiting the power to remit sins to the apostles avail to alter the conditions of the case. We can only affirm that the question of the Jews, in the sense in which they made it, is simply unanswerable: "Who *can* forgive sin, but God alone?" We must answer: As before God, none! He does not give His glory to another.

On the other hand, to apply a text like this to the preaching of the gospel, as if this were the power of the keys, as is so often done among Protestants, is to weaken the cause which it is intended to defend. Whose sins do *I* remit, when I preach the gospel? Clearly, none! And it is just here, where the question is of sins being put away from before God, that it is utterly impossible for men to do anything. Neither baptism nor anything else that can be done by man, can cleanse a soul for heaven; nor has it to do with admission there at all, but with discipleship, and therefore with the earth, and not with the heaven. It does not even admit into the Church; for there another baptism, that of the Spirit, perfectly distinct from it, takes its place, as we have seen. He who as Creator has given everything its place from the beginning does not override this, and confound all our thoughts by making matter do the work of Spirit, any more than He puts man into His own place. We must keep these lines clear, or everything falls into confusion. But there is a sphere of things on earth, which is in a peculiar way that of His interests, in which He has put man in responsibility to have things after His own mind, and where therefore a certain authority is necessarily committed to him. Here things are to be kept clean for Him; and therefore he must be able to pronounce within fixed limits between clean and unclean; therefore to cleanse *for that sphere.* Admission to fellowship or readmission after the suspension of this, these are examples with which we are all familiar. Baptism for the remission of sins is not difficult to understand in this way,—an authoritative, governmental remission, which testified on God's part to a soul His disposition towards it, if, on its side, there were no dishonesty of heart, but truthful response to the divine approach to it.

Lord our God shall [d]call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying, Be saved * from this [e]perverse generation.

5 (41–47): Results

5. Those, therefore, who [f]received his word were baptized; and in that day there were added about [g]three thousand souls. And they persevered in the apostles' [h]doctrine and [i]fellowship, in the [j]breaking of bread and [k]prayers. And [l]fear came on every soul, and many [m]wonders and signs took place through the apostles.

d *cf.* ch. 13. 48. *cf.* Rom. 9. 23–26.
e *cf.* Matt. 3. 7. *cf.* ch. 7. 51.
f *cf.* ch. 17. 11, 12. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 11.
g *cf.* ch. 1. 15. *cf.* Jno. 12. 24. *cf.* Jno. 14. 12.

* Or, "save yourselves."

h *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 14; *cf.* Col. 3. 16. i *cf.* 1 John 1. 3. j *cf.* ch. 20. 7; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 23–29. k *cf.* ch. 3. 1. *cf.* ch. 6. 4. l *cf.* Heb. 12. 28; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 17–19. m ch. 5. 12–16.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to every one who turns to God after this manner in true subjection to Jesus Christ as Lord. We must, of course, distinguish this one Gift common to all from the various "gifts" (*charismata*,—a different word) which were imparted variously. These will come to be considered in another place. Where the Spirit is, the gifts of the Spirit will, more or less, be found. The one is the Source; the other the stream; and, amid the changing forms of the latter, the fundamental Gift, without which is no Christianity, abides the same.

The apostle closes with assuring them of Israel's interest in the blessing, even though it had a wider range, as Joel had declared as to the day of which he spoke. The promise, he tells them, is for you and for your children; but beyond these, for all that are afar off,—the Gentiles; yet not as claim; even Israel could have no claim; it depended for all entirely upon the call of God's grace: "to as many," he adds, "as the Lord (that is, Jehovah) our God shall call."

We shall have to notice in its place that, when we come to the reception of the Spirit on the part of the Gentiles, the insistence upon baptism as a condition drops. God takes things into His own hands, as one may say, and the Spirit falls upon Cornelius and those with him while they are yet listening to Peter's address, and before ever a hint of baptism has been given. Saul of Tarsus, again, is baptized first, and so are the disciples of John at Ephesus. In the case of the Samaritans, again, even when they have been baptized there is still delay; and they have to receive the Spirit from the apostles' hands. Thus the order of reception is conditioned upon the persons: for the Jews who had openly rejected the Lord, baptism is always a pre-requisite; they must openly own Him whom they had disowned. The varying order, but above all, the entire setting aside of ordinances in the case of the Gentiles (which is our own case, for the most part now,) at once destroys the ritualistic teaching as to baptism. According to this, Cornelius must have received the Spirit while in an unregenerate condition! for he had not yet received the "sacrament of regeneration." Thus do the simple facts of history of themselves refute the whole system of error. Scripture is in all its parts prophetic; and the wisdom of God has given ample warning against the inroads of evil, for those who have hearts open to receive instruction. We shall see this more and more, as we go on with the inspired writer.

"With many other words," he adds, "did (Peter) testify, and exhort them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation."

5. God is at work, and the harvest is large and immediate: three thousand souls in one day! Nor was this temporary emotion; but the effects were permanent as they were deep. "They persevered in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,—in the breaking of bread and prayers." In this enumeration, that to which they owed all—the teaching—comes necessarily first, as the root of all the rest. Here was what gave them their fellowship; it was in the truth: participation in that drew them together. They had nothing of the poet's liberalism,—"for forms of faith let graceless zealots fight;"—grace had come to them in inseparable companionship with truth, which they found not in the world,

And all that believed were [n]together, and had all things [o]common, and [p]sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as any one had [q]need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the [r]temple, and [s]breaking bread at* home, received [their] food with [t]gladness and singleness of heart, [u]praising God, and having [v]favor with all the people; and day by day the Lord [w]added together those being saved.

*This may be rendered, "from house to house."

n *cf.* ch. 4. 23. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
o *cf.* ch. 4. 32–35. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17, 18 with 2 Thess. 3. 1–12.
p *cf.* Lk. 12. 33. *ctr.* Lk. 18. 22 with 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
q *cf.* Eph. 4. 28.

cf. ch. 6. 1. r ch. 3. 1. s ver. 42; *cf.* Heb. 13. 10-13. t *cf.* Neh. 8. 10-12; *cf.* Eccl. 9. 7. u *cf.* Eph. 5. 18-20. v ch. 5. 13; *cf.* Prov. 16. 7; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12-16. w ch. 5. 14; *cf.* ch. 9. 31 *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5; *cf.* Rom. 15. 7.

but which had exposed the world and set them apart from it to Him whom the world had crucified and by whose cross they were crucified to it. Of the Church they knew little yet; but they had found Christ; and the force of that irresistible attraction which drew them as to a common centre, drew them to one another. The Church began as the spiritual creation of that Spirit which had come to bear witness of Christ; and it knew Him before as yet it had learned to know itself.

These things find illustration in that which follows next,—"the breaking of bread,"—which from its first application to a common meal, we see here set apart to its sacred use in reference to that which the Lord had instituted for a remembrance of Himself. It is strange that any should dispute this application in the place before us, where certainly we are not meant to understand that the disciples "persevered" in partaking of food, nor in coming together for this, (which they never did,) nor in the "love-feasts," of which we read in Jude, but which were not an institution of Christ at all, and probably a later practice. The preliminary meal, of which the disciples had partaken with their Lord before the Last Supper, was the passover, which could not be thought of in this connection. And if, as is very probable, it was at the end of a common meal that they remembered the Lord's death, there could be no reason for so unlikely a thing, and so repulsive to the warm Christian hearts of those who are here spoken of, as naming the meal with which the Supper was associated, while forgetting that which alone made it worthy of mention.

The breaking of bread, in the mention thus made of it, shows the Lord as the Centre of His people, the Object before them, the Sustenance of their true life, the Effecter of their communion with one another: this realized in that precious Death, passed for ever, yet ever abiding in that which it has wrought and that which it has displayed. Lastly, prayer manifests the sense of constant need which the nearer we are to God is always the more realized.

The effect upon the outside multitude was that of fear; signs and wonders being continually wrought by the apostles as the special witnesses to the Risen Saviour. The people in the mass seemed with them, as in His early life with the Lord Himself. They were, in fact, at present in that border land, so hopeful, yet so unsafe, which will presently empty itself either into the fixed abodes of conviction and faith, or with more likelihood, into the seats of alienation and rejection.

Among those who believed was manifested a unity of heart and interest, in which the natural selfishness of the fallen condition was swallowed up in the fulness of a love which the sense of divine love had begotten. They were together in such sort that all they had was held in common; not by any law or outward constraint, which would have spoiled it all, but in the consciousness of what they were all to Christ, and what Christ was to each and all of them. Enriched by Him with a blessing which nothing could diminish, but the more they ministered it, the more they had it, "they sold their possessions and goods, and

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii., iv.)

The Testing of the Nation.

1 (iii.1-11): The power of Jesus' Name.

1. NOW Peter and John were going up into the [x]temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man, [y]lame from his mother's womb, was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple gate which is called [z]Beautiful, to ask [a]alms of those who went into the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to enter into the temple, asked an alms. But Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, [b]Silver and gold have I not; but what I have I give thee:

x ch. 2. 46. *cf.* Lk.24.53. *ctr.* ch. 21. 26-30.
y *cf.* ch.14.8. *cf.* Jno.5.5. *cf.* Rom.8.3. *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19.
z *cf.* He.10.1.
a *cf.* Jno.9.8. *cf.* Lk.18.35. *ctr.* Rom.8. 32. *ctr.* 1 Cor.3. 21-23.
b *cf.* 2 Cor.6. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11-13. *cf.* Phil. 4. 11-13.

distributed them to all, as any one had need." So by more than miracles was the power of the Spirit displayed among them. As for the rest, they were in their own consciousness but a remnant of Israel who had received Messiah. And though by the indwelling of the Spirit the House of God after a new manner had begun upon earth, yet their daily resort was still to the temple; and this was in the love that still waited upon His ancient people, permitted and used of God for testimony to the nation. But the temple after all was not where they could enjoy what was peculiar to themselves. The bread in which they remembered what had made all new to them was broken at home. In spite of the ambiguity of the expression, and the reference to the ordinary meal which follows it here, this is the most natural application of the breaking of bread in this place also. There seems scarcely need to tell us that they ate their meals at home! and to refer it, as has been done, to their having no longer part in the peace-offering or other sacrifices, has everything against it, at so early a date as this. Long afterwards we hear that the many thousands of the Jews who believed were all zealous of the law; and Paul even is persuaded to enter purified into the temple with men who were distinctly to have an offering offered for every one of them (chap. xxi. 20, 26). It is vain, therefore, to seek to transfer these new-made Christians to a later time than that to which we have, in fact, arrived. God bore long with the continuance of that which had been His own institution, and it would be many years before the epistle to the Hebrews would be written. The statement here seems certainly to have its only proper application to the Lord's Supper, while it would be not unsuited in such connection to speak of how even the common meals were taken with the gladness which the Christian feast had communicated to them.

Thus the happy days went on; and day by day the Lord added together those that were being saved. Israel would not yet turn to the light vouchsafed her; but a remnant were being marked off, in which would be found the nucleus of a new testimony: to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was to be made known in the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

SUBD. 4.

We are now to see the testing of the nation by the offer of divine grace to it as a whole,—the distinct promise that, even yet, if they will now repent and receive Him, Jesus, though in heaven, will return, and the blessing prophesied for them shall be fulfilled. The commission already given as to the Gentiles lies, therefore, still in abeyance, because the question of relation between Jew and Gentile in the new condition introduced will be affected by the answer given to such an offer. The hostility of the leaders is apparent from the outset; but that which ends hope is that the people as a whole more and more identify themselves with the position of the leaders; and by and by it is from the Jewish element that even in far-off cities the bitterest opposition comes to be found.

in the [c]name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles became strong, and [d]leaping up he stood and [e]walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and [f]praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they recognized him that it was he who sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with [g]wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. And, as he held fast to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

c ch. 4. 7-10. ver. 16. *cf.* ch. 16. 18.
d ch. 14. 10. *cf.* ch. 16. 24, 34. *cf.* Is. 35. 6. *cf.* ch. 10. 44.
e *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 12. *cf.* Gal. 5. 25. *ctr.* Matt. 13. 20, 21.
f *cf.* Lk. 18. 43. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.
g ch. 2. 12.

2 (III. 12-16): Conviction as to the denial and death of Jesus.

2 And Peter seeing it, answered to the people, Men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so intently upon us, as if by our [h]own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, and of

h *cf.* Gen. 41. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.

This is specially roused by the reception of the Gentiles on equal terms with Jews, by which, of course, these forfeit the exclusive privileges they have really so little valued. But this does not fall to be considered yet.

1. A man, lame from his birth, was accustomed to be carried and laid down at the temple gate which was called Beautiful, to solicit alms from those who went into the temple. He cannot but remind us of the similarly impotent man at the pool of Bethesda upon whom the Lord Himself works a like miracle of healing; and as in that case, we cannot but see here the condition of the nation, impotent at a door which impotence could not enter. The dwelling place of God, however nigh, and however beautiful the approach to it might be, was powerless for blessing, and indeed now vacant,—a seemly formalism only. They praised the gate indeed by which none really entered, great as might be the throng of worshipers, into the presence of God. The beggarly, maimed condition, for those who had eyes to see, characterized all who sought that way of approach.

It is in the consciousness of such a state that the power of the Name of Jesus makes itself known. At the ninth hour, being the third hour of prayer, the hour of the evening sacrifice,—the time when the answer to Daniel was vouchsafed, God manifests Himself in answer to that Name by Peter, who with John is going up still among those of whom they are not. Poor in that world in which his Lord had become poor, he has in the One despised by Israel as the Nazarene the secret of a power still available to them, if like the beggar they will but ask an alms. First lifted, he then leaps up and stands, and now enters into the temple a true worshiper. How simple and natural a picture of such an one, to whom, released from his life-bondage, every movement is a new joy, a leap of the heart to God. The people recognize with amazement this transformation from impotence to exuberant life, and seeing the man holding Peter and John, run to them in the porch called Solomon's, greatly wondering. Sad reminder of that ruin, from which they would fain believe they have emerged! well will it be if they let this preach to them their need of a Saviour, while they listen to the assurance that He indeed is come.

2. But this involves the story of their sin, which is charged home upon them. They need not look so earnestly on *them*, (the apostles say,) as if by power of their own, or by reason of their great piety, they had made the man to walk. No, it was the God of their fathers,—of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, from whom they had wandered so far as to be unconscious of His doings, who had acted for the glory of His Servant Jesus whom they had delivered up and even forced His condemnation at the hands of the Gentile governor, when *he* had

Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath [g]glorified his Servant* Jesus; whom *ye* delivered up, and [h]denied him in the presence of Pilate, when *he* had adjudged to [k]release [him]. But *ye* denied the Holy and Righteous One, and demanded a [l]murderer to be granted unto you, and [m]killed the Author of life; whom God hath [n]raised from among the dead, whereof we are [o]witnesses. And his name, through [p]faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye behold and know; even faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

3 (III.17-26): Yet He may return and the restitution of all things be fulfilled.

3. And now, brethren, I know that ye did it in [q]ignorance, as also your rulers; but God hath thus [r]fulfilled the things which he had fore-announced by the mouth of all the [s]prophets that his Christ should suffer. [t]Repent therefore, and be† converted, that your [u]sins may be blotted out; so that [v]times of refreshing may

*Greek παις, household servant, not δουλος, bondman.
†Or, "turn again."

21. 38; *cf.* Lk. 23. 34; *cf.* Rom. 11. 25–27. *r cf.* ch. 13. 27; *cf.* Matt. 26. 54, 56; *s cf.* Is. 53; *cf.* Ps. 22; *cf.* Zech. 13. 7; ch. 17. 3; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 11, 12. *t* ch. 2. 38; Lk. 24. 46, 47. *u cf.* Is. 43. 25; *cf.* Jer. 33. 8; *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2. *v cf.* Ps. 65. 12, 13; *cf.* Ps. 72. 6; *cf.* Hos. 6. 1–3; *cf.* Zech. 10. 1; *cf.* Is. 35. 1, 2.

i cf. 1 Pet. 1. 21. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18. *cf.* Jno. 2. 11.
j cf. Lk. 23. 5. *ctr.* Matt. 26. 70. *cf.* Gal. 1. 23.
k cf. Matt. 27. 24.
l cf. Lk. 23. 13-25. *cf.* Jno. 5. 43. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8-12.
m ch. 2. 23. Acts 7. 52. *cf.* Jno. 10. 18.
n ch. 2. 24.
o ch. 4. 33.
p cf. ch. 14. 9. *cf.* ch. 15. 9. *cf.* Mk. 9. 23, 24.
q cf. 1 Cor. 2. 8. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *ctr.* Matt.

given judgment in His favor. They had chosen instead of the Author of life, a murderer! but God had raised Him from the dead; and His Name, through faith in it, had wrought this miracle.

3. Hopeless indeed might their condition seem who had killed the Author of life! That which was their fundamental need they had put from them in a manner seeming to forbid all hope. As the Servant of God, He had come to minister to them, and they had struck down the ministering Hand. The Gentile would have saved whom the Jew put to death: Him whom they knew as the Holy and Righteous, and from whom mercy flowed out still, as it had flowed out in His life.

But the City of Refuge stood open still, as now divine grace assured them. As at the cross He had prayed for them as ignorantly doing what yet they had so heartily done, so now the apostle grounds still upon their ignorance, as the only possible argument in their behalf, an offer once again of mercy. God too had overruled for the accomplishment of His determinate purposes of good this wickedness itself. Messiah needs must suffer; and this suffering is of grace on His part. Grace then can manifest itself by its means. Did they repent now, nationally, and turn to God, not only would their sins be blotted out, but the presence of Jehovah would be again manifested in their midst, the unfailing sign of the Spirit's renewing influence, and He would send once more their appointed Messiah,—Jesus. Not till His return from heaven would come the long expected blessing for the earth, the time to which all prophets have ever been looking forward,—times of restoration physical as well as spiritual. These cannot be, then, while Israel is still in unbelief; and the long season that has elapsed since the offer made to them by the apostle here has been but a time of suspension of the earthly promises. God has, however, in the meanwhile been revealing and carrying into effect other purposes, and of fuller, higher blessing, —of grace therefore more wondrous, the unfolding of which we shall see gradually beginning, as soon as it is clear that Israel as a nation is still going to reject the grace yet being extended towards her, with the full testimony of the Spirit also, to make it good. In what is here before us, the trial is now upon her, and our eyes are directed to the result of this.

The apostle goes on to show the emphatic witness of Moses himself to Christ.

come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may [w]send the Christ fore-ordained to you, Jesus; * whom heaven must indeed receive [x]until the times of restitution of all things, of which God hath [y]spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began. Moses indeed said, A [z]Prophet shall [the] Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: and it shall be that every soul that shall not hear that prophet shall be [a]destroyed from among the people. And indeed [b]all the prophets, from Samuel and those following, as many as have spoken, have announced also these days. Ye are the [c]sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God appointed to our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy [d]seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. To you [e]first, God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in [f]turning every one of you from his iniquities.

4 (Iv. 1-22): The failure under test.

4. But while they were speaking to the people, the [g]priests and the captain of the temple, and the Saddu-

*Or, "Christ Jesus fore-ordained for you."

w cf. ch. 1. 11. cf. Ps. 96. 12, 13.
x cf. Ps. 110. 1. cf. Hos. 5. 15.
y cf. Is. 1. 25, 26. cf. Jer. 23. 5–8.
z Deut. 18. 15–19. cf. Lk. 24. 19. ch. 7. 37.
a cf. Jno. 16. 9. cf. ch. 13. 41.
b cf. 1 Sam. 15. 26–28. cf. 2 Pet. 1. 19.
c cf. Matt. 23. 31. cf. Rom. 9. 4, 5.
d Gen. 12. 3. Gen. 22. 18.
e cf. Lk. 24. 47. cf. ch. 13. 46. cf. Ro. 1. 16.
f cf. Matt. 1. 21. cf. Is. 59. 20.
g cf. Matt. 27. 1.

A Prophet like to himself he had declared that Jehovah would raise up to them: One whose authority he strongly affirms; not a mere expounder of what had been spoken before, but the Originator of a new dispensation, as was Moses, and necessarily, therefore, in advance of that which he had inaugurated. In the passage in Deuteronomy from which Peter quotes, it is after the inability of the people to draw nigh to God has been demonstrated, and the Lord has acquiesced in their own statement of it,—"They have well said that which they have spoken," —that He declares that He will raise up to them a new Prophet. Had Moses sufficed, there would not have needed to be another; but the Law must necessarily fail to bring nigh to God. "There shall no man see Me and live" had been His word to the lawgiver himself; and the veil before the holiest bore witness to it throughout the dispensation. But in this failure all fails for man's blessing; and on this account, as the apostle tells us, God finds fault with the law. There must be, then, another Prophet and a different message. If He be heard, then there opens for the recipient of it that otherwise inaccessible way to God; while, if He be not heard, there is indeed no remedy: "every soul that shall not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Thus has Moses spoken of One greater than himself. Thank God, though Israel as a nation rejected Him, as we know, in the days to which we are now looking back, yet "Him shall ye hear" is declared in her favor with regard to days to come. The blessing has been long delayed; but in the meanwhile the gospel has risen up above these human barriers to only a more wondrous height, to overflow to the nations with a fuller blessing.

But thus then had Moses spoken; and from Samuel, through a succession of witnesses raised up, the same things had been constantly uttered. The apostle urges them now upon His hearers, as the legitimate heirs, the sons of the prophets, and of the wide-reaching covenant of promise given before the Law, and not crippled by its ineffectiveness. In Abraham's Seed all the families of the earth would indeed find the blessing. To them, therefore, had Jesus come first of all, to bring it to them, in turning them every one from the iniquities which now were the true hindrance.

4. A sinister interruption here takes place,—the first note of warning from

cees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the [h]resurrection from among the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward until the morrow; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word [i]believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

And it came to pass upon the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the high-priestly family, were [j]gathered together. And when they had set them in the midst, they enquired, By what power, or by what name, have *ye* done this? Then Peter, [k]filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Rulers of the people and elders of Israel,* if *we* are to-day being examined on the ground of a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known

[h] ver. 33. *cf.* ch. 26. 23.

[i] *cf.* ch. 2. 41.

[j] *cf.* Jno. 11. 47. *cf.* Jno. 16. 1-3.

[k] *cf.* ch. 2. 4. *cf.* ch. 13. 51, 52. *cf.* Matt. 10. 20.

* Many omit "of Israel."

the heads of the people. While the lower classes listened, the religious leaders felt the preaching in the Name of Jesus to be a direct attack upon themselves. The most forward now and henceforth were the Sadducees, with whom the resurrection of the Saviour was the overthrow of their nihilistic creed. How happy might they have been to have their dread negations penetrated by this glorious light from heaven! but, in fact, the more complete the proof of the truth of the gospel, the more they were stirred up against it. Had it been less complete, they would undoubtedly have acted in a milder fashion; but when argument is made impossible, the will that lurks in it stands out from under the cover with the more stubborn energy to win the already decided battle. Of all men, the hopeless Sadducee should have been the most ready for the gospel; but in reality he was more indifferent than hopeless; his creed was positive in the present rather than negative as to the future; a fair world balanced in his mind the dimness of heaven. Thus he might in any wise not have troubled himself about the enthusiasm of the disciples, had not the miracles brought God too near and preached too alarmingly to the conscience. That should have broken him down before God, but that here the fanaticism of the rebellious spirit was aroused to get rid of the truth with the witness to the truth. But the truth not only abides, but sustains the witness also which it has called forth. The apostles are imprisoned; but the number of the converts rises to five thousand *men*. It seems as if the narrator were thinking, in this manner of statement, of the camp and battle-field.

The morrow comes, and with it the whole council is gathered together. They who have slain the Master now face the disciples, to find them very unlike the timid men they had been. Now it was not they that spoke, but, as it had been promised, the Spirit of their Father that spoke in them. The foremost now in the confession of Christ was he who had, in the very recent past, denied Him; and with none of them was there any hesitation or tremor of soul. They were "in nothing terrified by their adversaries," which the apostle speaks of afterwards to the Philippians in like case as "to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God" (Phil. i. 28).

Were *they* not afraid to put their idle question, when the "power" which had wrought was manifest and before their eyes, and manifestly divine? And did they not tremble to hear—so attested—the Name of Him whom they had slain? Had they heard of Peter's old denial? and did they dream that even then he might repeat it? Vain hope indeed, if it was theirs! The "Spirit of

to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the [l]name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom *ye* crucified, whom God raised from among the dead, by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the [m]Stone set at naught by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. And there is [n]no salvation in any other; for there is none other name [o]under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Now when they saw the [p]boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were [q]illiterate and home-bred * men, they wondered; they [r]recognized them also, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man who was healed standing with them, they had no [s]reply. But when they had commanded them to go out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed an [t]evident sign hath been done by them is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it [u]spread no further among the people, let us [straitly] [v]threaten them that they speak no more to any in this name. And having called them, they charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name

l ch. 3. 6, 16.
m Ps.118.22. Matt.21.42. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 6 8.
n cf. ch. 13. 26. *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *cf.*Jno.14.6.
o cf. Gal. 1. 1, 8. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19. *cf.*Col 1.23
p cf. vers.29 -31. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16. *cfr.* Jno.18 25 27.
*q cf.*1 Cor 1 26-29. *cf* Jno 7.15 -17.
r cf. Lk. 22 56.
s ver. 16. *cf.* Jno. 11. 47. *cf.* Jno. 15. 24.
*t cf.*ch.13.31. *cf.*ch. 7. 51.
u cfr. Mk.1. 44, 45.
v ch.5.28,40.

* The word suggests the thought of "private persons," in contrast to those who had been in public life.

glory and of God" was filling Peter now; and they had to hear their guilt charged home upon them, and Jesus Christ the Nazarene declared, as His own lips had once intimated, the "Stone" rejected by the builders, as prophecy had forewarned would be the case. Yes, the building of living stones upon this Corner-stone was already taking place, as thousands in Jerusalem were now witness; by which their office of builders had plainly passed from them. Nay, more; there was no salvation either in any other; none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they could be saved!

They do not, in the presence of their persecutors, as before the people, append to this the promise of Christ's return. This hard-trodden ground must be plowed up, before such good seed as this could be safely committed to it. But they preach salvation, as to perishing men, Sanhedrists as they might be, and doctors of the Law; they themselves in possession of the only security for life and blessing, which they offer with a conscious certainty which, as we know, the teaching of the scribes had not, but which had always characterized their Master's teaching. Still, as of old, it causes astonishment; illiterate, home-bred men as they plainly were. And there stands with them their voucher, a crippled beggar restored, with a new gladness greater than for his physical healing! Among themselves, when the accused have been for awhile sent aside, the council admit their perplexity. An evident sign has been done which they can as little deny as they choose to accept; and the worst of it is that it has laid hold of the people;—for men with their strong faith in the present an argument most difficult to resist; for such faith seeks no martyrdom. Truth also they seek not, these leaders of the people, but that which is convenient and will preserve their valued authority. They decide therefore that they will threaten the disciples, and forbid their speaking any more in the name of Jesus. If they cannot refute, they can yet forbid. They can make wrong by edict what they cannot prove to be wrong by any argument they possess.

But they find the men intractable beyond their expectation: men to whom God is the fountain of all authority, and whose consciences are, without fear of results, before Him alone. Their course is fixed, to obey God rather than

of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it be right before God to hearken unto you [w]more than unto God, judge ye; for *we* [x]cannot but speak what we have seen and heard. But when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way they could punish them, on account of the people; for they all were [y]glorifying God for that which was come to pass. For the man was more than forty years old, upon whom this sign of healing had come to pass.

5 (iv.23-36): God with His own.

5. And being [z]let go, they went to their own [company], and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard it, they [a]lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, [b]Sovereign Lord, thou art He who hath made heaven and earth and sea, and all things in them; who by the

w ch. 5. 29.
x *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16.
cf. Jer. 20. 9.
cf. Am. 3. 8.
cf. 2 Cor. 5. 11-15,20,21.
y ch. 3. 10.
cf. ch. 5. 26.

z *cf.* ch. 14. 26.
cf. Heb. 10. 25.
a *cf.* ch. 1. 14.
cf. ch. 12. 5, 12.
b *cf.* Ps. 114. 7.
cf. Ps. 124. 8.
cf. ch. 17. 24.

man; and they dare even to appeal to the consciences of their judges in behalf of such a determination. With the council the fear of men is in proportion to the absence of their fear of Him; and this deters them from going further at the present time. They threaten and let them go. For the wave of popular feeling on account of the miracle that has been done is at present not safely to be resisted.

5. The disciples return to their own company;—to how different an atmosphere! The opposition of the enemy had failed, and was destined to fail; it had only given opportunity to set before the whole council of the people the blessed Name which it was their happiness to make known. It had thus furthered their work, not hindered it; and this was but the type and prophecy of all the future,—"He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." The threatenings only show the restraint actually put upon those whose will for harm could not be doubted, and strengthened in going forward those whom they were intended to intimidate. All this they now report among those greeting them on their return, who answer with an outburst of praise, lifting up their voices to God with one accord, as Sovereign Lord of all that He has created, and who has fulfilled what long He had declared in overruling the conspiracy of Jews and Gentiles against Jehovah and against His Christ. The quotation is from the second psalm, which, according to the common belief among the Jews, they ascribe to David. With strange and terrible unanimity, indeed, had all the world (Jews and Gentiles together) combined against Him with whom was all the hope of the world. But this is only the proof of the thorough sameness of man everywhere,—not only one blood, as God made them, but of one spirit, such as the Fall has made them. Only divine grace has anywhere brought in a difference, and then by a change so great and sovereign that the Spirit of God speaks of it as "new creation." Israel's rejection of her Lord was indeed a perfect witness of how all help that could be given him, short of that, must be unavailing, when the Jew it was who clamored for His crucifixion from the unwilling Gentile. So too it was the Jew who was to hound on the heathen persecution of His followers in the time soon to come.

They had accomplished their evil will. There was no resistance. The Light of the world had seemed to be quenched in darkness; but only to rise again in unsetting glory. There had been done just what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done!

What then could His disciples ask, save for boldness to proclaim and follow Christ? *He* had been more than content through all to be the Servant of that unique and glorious will. They pray only for the stretching out of God's

mouth of thy servant * David hath said, [c] Why did the nations rage? and the peoples meditate vain things? The [d] kings of the earth set [themselves], and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy Servant† Jesus, whom thou hast [e] anointed, were gathered together in this city both [f] Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and the peoples of Israel, to do [g] whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, [h] look upon their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants,‡ that with all [i] boldness they may speak thy word, in that thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and that signs and [j] wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant† Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was [k] shaken where they were gathered together; and they were all [l] filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake the word of God with boldness.

[c] Ps. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 46. 6, 7.
[d] *cf.* Ps. 48. 4. *cf.* Is. 52. 15.
[e] *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* ch. 10. 38.
[f] Lk. 23. 7-13.
[g] *cf.* ch. 13. 27. *cf.* ch. 2. 23. *cf.* Jno. 19. 11.
[h] *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 16. *cf.* 2 Sa. 16. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21-23.
[i] *cf.* Eph. 6. 19. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20.
[j] ch. 5. 12-16.
[k] *cf.* ch. 2 2.
[l] *cf.* ver. 8.

* *Παῖς.* Many read, "by the mouth of thy servant, our father David, through the Holy Spirit."

† *Παῖς*; and always when referring to our Lord.

‡ Literally, "bond servants," *δουλοι*.

hand in such a way as to give them power and courage; and that signs and wonders may be done in Christ's Name, to carry on that blessed service.

How certain is the answer, when the Lord and His interests are the burden of the prayer! and there is no reserve of self-seeking to give unsteadiness to the faith that would lay hold of Omnipotence! The assurance of being heard is immediately granted them, the place being shaken in which they were gathered together. It is the answer of the Creator, as appealed to, and who will yet "shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and shake all nations," to bring in Christ (Hag. ii. 6, 7). But also they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and speak the word with boldness.

Lest we should sigh and say, These are but records of far-off days, let us remember that we are exhorted, and it is part of our responsibility, therefore, to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18.) This is no question of gifts lost to the Church, nor even of exceptional blessing. We may make it, alas, exceptional; but that is another thing. It is but, in fact, a question of devotedness: for the Spirit is here to glorify Christ, not to give impossible brightness to lives lived in the circle of our own petty interests; which, indeed, so far as they answer to this character, are not in any true sense our interests; for these are all secured with Christ on high. We are identified with Him as our Representative before God, to have resting upon us the favor in which He dwells; and He is identified with us as His representatives on earth, for a life for Him as thus sent into it. We see then how fully and simply in place is what we have here. The disciples are full of His interests. How could it be otherwise than that the Witness for Christ on earth should fill them as vessels of testimony for Him? The same argument will always hold good; and the Spirit can never be indifferent to His glory. To suppose any thing else would be to dishonor Him who is come to abide with us forever, and who is yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same. For us also, every thing else must be shaken, until He is made supreme over all.

There follow also, as surely, the fruits in practical life. The innate selfishness of the heart is surmounted by the influx of spiritual blessing which expands while it overflows it. There was no communistic law among these gathered saints; it would have spoiled all, if there had been; it was a unity of

And of the multitude of those that believed, heart and soul were [m]one; and not one said that any of the things that he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them. And with great power did the apostles give [n]witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great [o]grace was upon them all. For neither was there any in [p]want among them; for as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and [q]laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every one, according as he might have need.

m ch. 2. 44, 45. *cf.*1 Cor.12. 13.
n ch. 1. 8. *cf.*1 Cor.15. 5-8.
o *cf.* ch.2.47. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 13.
p *cf.*2 Cor.8. 14, 15. *cf.*Rom.12. 13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17, 18.
q ver. 37. *cf.*ch.6.2-4.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. iv. 36–v. 11.)

The Government of God over those with Him.

AND [r]Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, A son of consolation), a Levite, by birth a man of Cyprus, being possessed of land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and [s]appropriated [part] of the price, his wife also being [t]privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath [u]Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to appropriate [part] of the price of the land? While it remained did it not remain thine [v]own? and

r ch. 11. 22, 23, etc. *cf.*ch.15.39.
s *ctr.*ch.4.36, 37. *cf.*Josh.7.1. *cf.* Lev. 23. 17. *ctr.* Deut. 26. 12-14.
t *cf.* Prov. 11. 21. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 3. 7.
u *cf.* Jno.13. 2, 27. *cf.*1 Tim. 6. 10.
v *cf.*ch. 4.32. *ctr.*2 Cor.9. 1-9.

heart which allowed none of them to say that what was really his belonged to him. The sale of lands and houses was optional and unsolicited, as we see by the very specification of those who did this. There was therefore no general renunciation of personal title; but a love that knew no holding back from the need of another. It was the instinct of hearts that had found their real possessions in that sphere into which Christ had risen. The glorious fact of resurrection to which testimony was being given now with power took them of necessity out of the world; and great grace was on them all. The deeper need which could not be thus met found still the means to meet it in the actual sale of possessions on the part of those that had them; so that there were none that lacked: the money being laid at the apostles' feet. It is not necessarily that all sold all they had; but that this was the way in which the need was met: the history following, and which grows out of this, seems to make this plain.

SUBD. 5.

We have now to see the government of God over His own, now separated as a distinct company from the mass of Israel, although one could not say, as yet, from Israel itself. The trial of the nation as such is not yet ended. Meanwhile we are called away from this to see the attempt of the enemy against this new beginning, and the solemn judgment of God by which it is defeated. Yet on the other hand, we are not to overlook the divine appreciation of the fruits of the Spirit, where they are found, as in the case of Joseph, surnamed Barnabas, who by his ministry in self-sacrificing love to the need of the saints "purchases to himself a good degree" (1 Tim. iii. 13), and we hear of him accordingly, in the after history. His name answers to his character here,—"one who adds,"—and he becomes indeed a "son of consolation,"—meriting his surname.

In terrible contrast to him is Ananias ("Jah has shown grace") but who abuses grace to his own destruction. The good report of Barnabas, if we may

when it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto [w]men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, [x]fell down and expired: and there came a great [y]fear upon all that heard. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, and carried him out and buried him.

And it came to pass about three hours afterwards, that his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. And Peter answered her, [z]Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. And Peter said unto her, Why have ye [a]agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they will carry thee out. And [b]immediately she fell at his feet and expired; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the assembly, and upon all that heard these things.

w vers. 3, 9. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 8. *cf.* Lk. 10. 16. *ctr.* 1 Thes. 2. 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.
x *cf.* Lev. 10. 1–3. ver. 10.
y ver. 11. *cf.* Heb. 12. 28.
z *cf.* Ezek. 18. 20. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 22.
a ver. 2. *ctr.* Matt. 18. 19.
b ver. 5. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 24. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.

judge by the connection, seems to have moved him; but only with an ungodly emulation. He covets the reputation and influence; with perhaps much greater things following, as the movement spreads; but he has no thought, even for this, of making the sacrifice demanded. Outwardly he must do it, while his heart refuses; and thus, in conjunction with his wife, he forms a deliberate plan to deceive,—leaving God out. He actually sells his possession, and professedly brings the whole purchase-money, to lay it down at the apostles' feet. But he has not brought the whole: he reserves a part for himself, and in the midst of the divine power working (only in grace as yet, which probably he misinterprets, to his ruin,) does not fear to offer this imitation of the fruit of divine love,—in fact, a fraudulent attempt to buy for himself what alone he values. Satan was thus working from inside the assembly, to destroy truth and holiness, and thus early to introduce into it the worldly elements which, by and by, alas, were to gain open allowance. But the Spirit of God, as yet ungrieved, forbids the intrusion of the evil; and judgment swift and terrible smites down the transgressor. His unhappy wife, coming in afterwards, and deliberately reaffirming her husband's falsehood, shares his punishment. And fear falls upon all the assembly, and upon all that hear these things.

Thus we have indicated to us the evils which, from within as well as from without, threatened the infant Church. It is in a hostile world. It carries the fatal seeds of corruption in its own bosom. For in this respect the community can only be as those who compose it. The exercise as to evil and the struggle with it we are not yet, in the wisdom of God, delivered from; although the final deliverance is completely secured. God is training us for eternity, and to bring us into full participation in His apprehension of it. For this He would have us see it as those who are partakers of the divine nature, and yet linked with that flesh in which "dwelleth no good thing." Responsible to be its masters, we may yet degrade ourselves to do its will, and need at all times to be on the watch against it; while the world around appeals to it, and incites it to activity, and Satan with all the cunning of four thousand years' acquirement is "the prince of this world," proved so by the Cross! So thoroughly are we intended, it is plain, to learn the painful—and yet, it must be, salutary—lesson of the nature of that which exhibits the ruin of the creature fallen away from God! But this is also the background of the divine glory in redemption, in which He is displayed in His mastery over it, and thus we are held fast to Him forever.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. v. 12–vi. 7.)

Triumph within and without.

1 (v. 12–16): Constant power.

1. AND by the [c]hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the [d]rest dared no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them; (and [e]believers were more and more added to the Lord,—multitudes both of men and women;) insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and placed them on beds and couches, that at the least the [f]shadow of Peter, when he came, might overshadow some one among them. And the multitude also came together from the [g]cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick persons, and those troubled by unclean spirits, who were all healed.

2 (v. 17–33): Persecution and deliverance.

2. And the [h]high priest rose up, and all that were with him, being the sect of the [i]Sadducees, and were filled with jealousy,* and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. But an [j]angel of [the] Lord opened the prison doors by night, and brought them out, and said, Go, stand in the temple, and [k]speak unto the people all the words of this life. And when they heard it, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. And when the high priest was come, and they that were with him, they called together the [l]council, and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they found them not in the prison;

c ch. 2. 43.

d *cf.* Ex. 12. 31–33. ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 25.

e *cf.* ch. 6. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 9. 31

f *cf.* ch. 19. 11, 12. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7 with Heb. 12. 13.

g *cf.* Matt. 4. 24 with Jno. 14. 12.

h *cf.* Jno. 11. 47 with Jno. 15. 20.

i Matt. 22. 23.

j ch. 8. 26. ch. 12. 7–11.

k *cf.* ch. 1. 8. *cf.* ch. 4. 20, 21.

l ch. 6. 12.

* Or, "wrath."

SUBD. 6.

The inspired historian does not detain us long with this now, but passes on to speak of the Church's triumph over this double evil, within and without.

1. There is the constant display of divine power at the hands of the apostles; so the crowds follow, and the people magnify them; while the fear of what has taken place deters those from joining them who are not joined to the Lord in living faith. But multitudes are thus added to Him, both of men and of women. Consciences are brought into serious exercise, with the sure result of many believing. The place which is habitually frequented, and in which we have found them before, is Solomon's porch; the testimony of their ruin under the old covenant, whatever may have been the pains to cover it up since, and even to decorate that which covered it. Jerusalem thus becomes a centre to which men flock from all the districts round, bringing the sick and those oppressed by demons,—two classes always carefully distinguished in the word of God; and the very shadow of Peter is sought to for its power to heal; nor do we read of disappointment even in this. The masses all are healed. So fully is the prayer of true and devoted hearts for the glory of Jesus answered of God.

2. Persecution arises again, and from the same quarter as before; the high priest being foremost, with the sect of the Sadducees, to which he belonged. But when the apostles are once more shut up in prison, an angel of the Lord (that is, of Jehovah) opens the doors by night, and bids them enter again into the temple, to preach there unto the people "all the words of this life." In the morning, therefore, the prison being securely shut, they are found in the temple at their

and returned and reported, saying, We found the prison shut with all [m] security, and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened them, we found no one within. And when they heard these words, both the captain of the temple and the chief priests, they were much perplexed concerning them, what this would come to. And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put into the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, not with violence, for they [n] feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And they brought them, and set them in the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We straitly [o] charged you not to teach in this name, and behold, ye have [p] filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to [q] bring upon us this man's blood. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must [r] obey God rather than men. The God of our [s] fathers hath raised up Jesus; whom *ye* [t] slew and hanged upon a tree. Him hath God with his right hand [u] exalted [as] Founder* and Saviour, to give [v] repentance to

m *cf.* Jno.20. 19.

n *cf.* Matt. 21. 26.

o ch.4.18–21.
p ch. 4. 4.
q *cf.* Matt. 27. 25.
cf. Matt.23. 35.
r *cf.* Ex.1.17. ch. 4. 19.
s ch. 3. 13.
cf. ch.13.17.
t ch. 2. 23.
u ch. 2. 33.
v *cf.* Lk.5.32.
cf. ch.11.18.

* Or, Leader.

blessed work. The council is perplexed, and wonder what will be the end of it; but the issue raised is become so serious for them, that they will dispute it with God Himself. So they command them to be brought once more, though it has to be done quietly, lest the excited people should stone the officers; and for the second time the council of the nation, in answer to their charge of violating the prohibition they had given, have to listen to the statement of their crime. The rulers had made obedience to them impossible by their own vain conflict with the God of their fathers. Him, whom they had put to death with the greatest indignity, God had raised up, and with His right hand exalted Him to be Founder* and Saviour, to begin that new temple to God's praise, of which they had before proclaimed Him the Foundation-Stone. But for this it was necessary that every one who should form part in it—for the temple was to be, as Peter explains from his own name, a building of "living stones" (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5)—should be cleansed and sanctified. The Founder must therefore be a Saviour, and give repentance and remission of sins. The apostles say, "to Israel," and this He will yet do. It was the nation that was at present before them, and to whom their message was. The Church had not emerged into distinct thought, although it was in existence in fact, but as a babe that had not yet learned to know itself. But Christ,—Christ was their absorbing occupation and delight; no higher could be, though they were to learn much more of their own relationship to Him. "And we are witnesses of these things; and the Holy Spirit also, which God hath given to them who obey Him."

But it is not proof which they were wanting,—these leaders of the people; just the reverse; and to be reminded of the proof which was all too demonstrative only throws them into a passionate rage that would quench itself in the blood of those who so fearlessly maintain this testimony. Had they not quenched this light once? Could they not again do so? Had they not put out of their way the Master? Could they not deal with the disciples?

* The word here is the same as that in the first answer of the apostles, and there translated "Author,"—"Author of life." It does not seem practicable to give a uniform rendering, except, with the common version, we use the very meagre word, "Prince." The meaning is, "one who begins, or originates;" thus, leader and author in one. "Founder," which is also given by the lexicons, unites these thoughts, and seems the best adapted to the sense in this place.

Israel, and [w]remission of sins. And *we* are [x]witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit [y]also which God hath given to them that obey him. But they, when they heard this, were [z]cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

3 (34-42): Sheltered.

3. But there stood up in the council a [a]Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, had in honor among all the people, and commanded to put forth the men for a short time. And he said unto them, Men of Israel, take [b]heed to yourselves as regards these men, what ye are going to do. For [c]before these days rose up Theudas, professing to be somebody, to whom a number of men—about four hundred—joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man rose up Judas the Galilean in the days of the [d]census, and drew away people after him. *He* also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were [e]scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will

w cf. Lk.24. 47, 48.
x ch. 1. 8.
y cf. Heb.10. 15-17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
z ch. 7. 54. *ctr.* ch.2.37.
a cf. ch.22.3. *cf.* ch.23. 6.
b cf. ch. 23.9. *cf.* Matt.12 30.
c cf. ch. 21. 38. *cf.* Jno.10.8.
d cf. Lk. 2.2.
e cf. Jno. 10. 12. *ctr.* Jno.11. 52.

So impossible is it for His enemies to understand the patience of God, which is oftentimes so great a trial to His people even. If He has indeed this power, how is it that, as the Psalmist puts it, He does not "pluck His hand out of His bosom," and deal more openly with His adversaries? Will He use it in healings and raising up crippled beggars, and let His people lie so defenceless in the hands of their persecutors? Can this gentle zephyr ever grow into a tornado blast? They cannot believe it, however great at times the evidences may seem to be. Did not the prison doors unaccountably open? Yes; but that did not deliver out of their hands after all! Balance this against that: even their Master did not come down from the cross; and the cross seems ordained for His disciples also. Yes; the Cross! and how little yet do we understand its glory!

3. Thus, even if He interferes for His own, there is generally a veil over His Face: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known!" Still, for all that, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock" (Ps. lxxvii. 19, 20).

Christ's witnesses are now to prove this; they are to be sheltered, yet by no apparent intervention of the divine Hand. One of the councilors themselves, a Pharisee and not a believer, though brought by all he has seen and heard into the neutral position which his advice indicates, is the instrument which God uses at this time to shelter the witnesses of His grace to men. Gamaliel, a man of great weight among the Jews, and grandson of the celebrated Hillel, having caused the apostles to be put forth for a little while, remonstrates against any violence. The case before them, he urges, was no solitary one; and the examples they had had of impostors who had arisen showed how surely these pretensions of men came to nought. He mentions two of these: one well-known,—"Judas of Galilee, in the days of the census,—the other a Theudas,* only conjecturally taken to be either a Judas, in the reign of Archelaus, as Archbp. Ussher thought, or else a Matthias, about the close of that of Herod. Both attempts ended dis-

*There having been another Theudas, resembling this one of Luke, but some fifty years too late, mentioned by Josephus, this has naturally been used by infidelity to discredit the Scripture narrative. But, as the name was common, so the insurrections of the time were many; "the Theudas, whose defeat by Fadus he places a dozen years later" than Gamaliel's speech, "seems to have had a far larger following than the four hundred men of whom our Evangelist writes." (W. Kelly on the Acts.) Ussher speaks of Theudas as only the Syriac form of Judas; while Koehler (in Herzog's Real Encyclop.) makes it the Greek translation of Matthias, the "gift of Jehovah" or of God.

be [f]overthrown; but if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them;—that ye be not even found [g]fighters against God. And they were persuaded by him; and having called the apostles, they [h]beat them, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, [i]rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and the house,* they [j]ceased

*Or, "at home."

[f] *cf.* Ps. 2. 1-5.
[g] *cf.* ch. 9. 4, 5. *cfr.* ch. 11. 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 22.
[h] *cf.* ch. 22. 19.
[i] *cf.* Matt. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12-16. *cf.* ch. 21. 13.
[j] *cf.* Eph. 6. 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 9.

astrously, as Gamaliel reminds his hearers, and so would this, if it were not of God. The possibility of this he warns them of, and the result in that case of being found fighting against God. A tremendous possibility, indeed!

His advice is conformable to such a suspense of judgment: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone." To which they agree, with a strange modification of their own; for while they acknowledge they may be fighting against God, and so give up their murderous intent, they contradict themselves, and show the malice of their hearts, by beating these possible witnesses for God, before they let them go! and again forbidding them to speak what they cannot venture to say may not be truth! Such a being is man!

But Gamaliel himself, though impressed, and right in his refusal to act in the dark as if in the light, is otherwise wrong in his principles, and untrue to the truth. His *judgment by the issue* leaves him a doubter till that issue; and when, and what, may that issue be? If one could look far enough, no doubt the end would be seen to be in accordance with the righteousness of God who governs. But who will undertake to trace this with any infallibility through those ways which the Psalmist confesses are in the sea, and His footsteps are not known? Who will pierce the clouds and darkness that are about Him, and give a trustworthy account of all His doings? The Psalmist complained of the prosperity of the wicked, and had to pursue them to the other side of death, in order to find satisfaction (Ps. lxxiii.). The friends of Job argue like Gamaliel here, and are rebuked by the sufferer as speaking deceitfully for God (Job xiii. 7); for he also has seen the wicked spend their days in prosperity (chap. xxi. 13). The Preacher too sees it as among the vanities of earthly things, "that there be righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and again there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous" (Eccl. viii. 14). While Habakkuk complains to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity that yet He looketh upon them that deal treacherously, and holdeth His peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than himself (Hab. i. 13). And Jehovah answers him that "the just shall live by *faith*" (ii. 4).

And this is what Gamaliel with his temporizing policy has left out. He would wait and watch, and go down to the grave perhaps unconvinced; and so there is reason to believe he did; while a bolder and more hasty spirit might catch more quickly his conclusion, and decide,—but decide wholly wrong. For it would be hard upon his principles to accept in his way as the witnesses for God men "as it were, appointed unto death, a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men;—hungry and athirst, and naked, and buffeted"! Must not those who laid their stripes upon the apostles now have fancied they were helping to disprove these fanatical teachings with every stroke of their lash? The meaning of the Cross would be, for them and for their teacher both, an impossibility to comprehend.

But God none the less had sheltered His people; and, as for the rest, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name! And still, every day, in the temple and in the house, they ceased not to teach and tell the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ.

not to teach and tell the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ.

4 (vi.1-7): Trial from weakness.

4. Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was [k]multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the [l]Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, that their widows were overlooked in the [m]daily ministrations. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not right that we should [n]leave the word of God, and serve tables. Look out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men, [o]well reported of, full of the [Holy]* Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will [p]appoint over this business; but *we* will give ourselves up to [q]prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they [r]chose Stephen, a man [s]full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon,

k ver. 7. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15.
l ch. 9. 29.
m ch. 4. 34, 35.
n *cf.* Ex. 18. 17–26. ver. 4.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 2. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 7–10. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 12.
p *cf.* ch. 14. 23. *cf.* Tit. 1. 5.
q *cf.* ch. 13. 2. *cf.* Col. 2. 1, 2.
r ver. 8.
s *cf.* ch. 11. 24.

* Some omit.

4. Another trial was at hand; and now again from within: a difficulty had to be met, which the very growth in numbers tended to produce, the natural selfishness of man's heart showing itself amid all the power and joy of the work of the Spirit constantly progressing. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews," or Hellenists, "against the Hebrews," (the native Jews,) "because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." It does not say, they *were* neglected, but that this was affirmed. In fact, although grace was here dominant above it, there was always a certain jealousy existing between these two classes. The Jews born in foreign countries tended to more liberal views than those of Judea, and indeed to a liberality as far from the truth on one side as the Pharisaism of the Rabbinistic teachers was upon the other. It was upon the side of the Hebrews, however, that jealousy was rather to be expected. Here it was on that of the Hellenists; but perhaps a reaction resulting from the knowledge of such a spirit generally existing, which would give rise to suspicions such as we find actually manifested now. But there is grace to meet them effectually, as has been often pointed out; for the names of those chosen on account of the complaints, to take charge of the whole matter of the ministry of the common fund are Greek, every one; and thus, presumably Hellenistic. Those who murmured should have the distribution in their own hands; and those who cannot trust their brethren shall find that nevertheless their brethren can trust *them*. How lovely is divine grace! and how effectual is such a settlement! The thought that some have had, that there had been already men appointed to this charge, but who were all Hebrews, and that the seven now chosen were only an addition to the previous number to satisfy the foreign element by giving them representation which hitherto they had not had, is as totally without foundation in Scripture, as it destroys all the beauty of the act itself. In this case, it was but a mere act of tardy justice, or at least the reparation of an actual oversight, which might have given some apparent ground for the complaint. But there is no truth in it; for it is the apostles who have hitherto been in charge of that which we have seen laid at their feet for that purpose; and who now take occasion to relieve themselves of what was become a burden, distracting them from their own proper work. The disciples are now to choose those in whom they can have confidence for the management of that which they had themselves contributed; the apostles, however, giving them appointment, as being the divinely constituted leaders, and representatives of the absent Lord.

The word of God is that which we see they recognize as their true sphere of service, and that to which they desire wholly to devote themselves; joining with this prayer, which they put first, as the necessary prerequisite. Without

and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a [t]proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they [u]laid their hands upon them. And the word of God [v]increased; and the number of the disciples [w]multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the [x]priests were obedient to the faith.

t *cf.* ver. 1.
u *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 22.
v *ctr.* Eph. 4. 11, 12.
w ch. 19. 20.
x *ctr.* Jno. 7. 48.

SUBDIVISION 7. (Chap. vi. 8–vii.)

Completion of the Testimony to the Nation.

1 (vi. 8-15): The occasion.

1. NOW Stephen, [y]full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. And there arose certain of those who were of the synagogue which is called [the synagogue] of the Libertines, and of Cyreneans, and Alexandrians, and those who were of

y ver. 5.

that link of conscious dependence, what gift,—even the greatest,—could at all avail? But here we realize the exceeding importance attaching to it in their minds: "We will give ourselves up to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Is it not here, in fact, that we fail so much, and the ministry of the word fails correspondingly?

Even for such work as serving tables men are to be sought full of the Holy Spirit, and of wisdom; and the first two that are among the number of those appointed are to be owned and honored of God afterwards in very different ways. One of them also is a proselyte,—of a class thoroughly despised by the Hebrews in general; even while they would do much to gain them. But the grace of God was removing already these unspiritual estimates,—merging all human distinctions in the consciousness of a common relationship to Christ and to God. They are set apart, not without prayer, and by the imposition of hands, as a token, doubtless, of the fellowship with them in their new office. Thus the brief trouble ended; and all was overruled for blessing and the display of the new spirit which animated the new company of believers. The power of it was felt in the increased power of the word of God. The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and even of the priests a great company became obedient to the faith. The expression made use of in their case lays stress upon the greater difficulty, speaking humanly, to be surmounted by those whose office it would set aside; and of this, although the full light of Christianity had not yet dawned, there were already many intimations.

SUBD. 7.

In fact, the whole system of Judaism is tottering to its fall; and the nation is ready to give its last, emphatic answer to the grace that has visited it. The number to which the converts had increased could only arouse hostility proportionately more, as the leaders felt their authority compromised, themselves personally attacked, and all ranks being swept away into an opposition continually gathering strength, with its arguments which could be met only by force, and its signs and wonders which could neither be denied nor imitated. Only the fear of the people had hitherto restrained, as we have seen, the outbreak of fury on the part of the council twice before. And now it is increasingly being felt that a struggle cannot be averted; it is in fact a death-struggle. The occasion of its coming on is now shown us by the inspired historian; and with this the offer to the nation as such ends. Stephen, "full of grace and power," becomes, on that very account, the object of special enmity to the enraged people, and as the first martyr, receives the "crown" of which his name speaks.* He becomes the messenger sent after the Lord, to say, "We will not have this Man to reign

*The meanings of the seven names are no doubt significant:—1. Stephen—A crown. 2. Philip—A lover of horses—a racer. 3. Prochorus—A leader of praise. 4. Nicanor—A victor. 5. Timon—Honorable. 6. Parmenas—Enduring. 7. Nicholas—Conqueror of the people.

Cilicia and of Asia, [z]disputing with Stephen. And they were [a]not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit in which he spake. Then they [b]suborned men who said, We have heard him saying blasphemous things against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him, and seized him, and [c]brought him to the council. And they set up false witnesses who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words [d]against the holy place and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will [e]destroy this place, and [f]change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that sat in the council, looking intently upon him, saw his [g]face as the face of an angel.

z *cf.* ch. 13. 45.
a Lk. 21. 14, 15. *cf.* Jer. 1. 8, 9. *cf.* Ps. 119. 98–100.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 9–13. *cf.* Mk. 14. 55–59.
c ch. 5. 21.
d *cf.* ch. 21. 28. *cf.* ch. 7. 47–50. *ctr.* Matt. 21. 12, 13.
e *cf.* Matt. 23. 38, 39. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.
f *cf.* ch. 15. 10, 11; *cf.* Gal. 6. 12–16.
g *cf.* ch. 7. 55, 56 with 2 Cor. 3. 13, 18.

over us." The glory of Christ shines upon the face of His witness, and makes it radiant with the light of heaven, where the Son of man stands at the right hand of God. Earth has cast out the Light; but to earth's outcasts heaven is opening, as it never opened yet. We have an intimation, indeed, of Paul's "gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" although not yet is Paul come to proclaim it. He is there! yes; keeping the garments of those that stone that glory from the face of Stephen!

1. We do not read hitherto of any miracles wrought by other hands than those of the apostles; but now the "power" that is in Stephen manifests itself in great wonders and signs among the people. There is commencing, apparently, a wider bestowal of gifts of this kind, such as was, at any rate, found afterwards. The "faith," of which we have been told that he was full, doubtless coveted, as the apostle exhorts at a later time, the best gifts, and these, although not so valuable in themselves as that of prophecy, were of great importance for the crisis then approaching. The saints had prayed, on the first return of the apostles from the council, that God would glorify the name of Jesus by stretching out His hand to heal; and Stephen's endowment is found in connection with most earnest testimony. Hellenist himself, the men of the Hellenistic synagogues to whom he had been probably formerly well known, undertake disputation with him, but are unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he speaks. This rouses all their malice against him; and as with his Lord, to whom through this closing scene he is in growing likeness, they suborn men to bear false witness against him. They could easily pervert his words, no doubt, into blasphemies against Moses; and those against God could be, with not much more difficulty, reasoned from the other. And now we find what is deeply significant for the issue with regard to the nation; the people, who had hitherto been favorable to the disciples, now join the outcry against them. Henceforth, save as the direct action of the Spirit still produces faith in a remnant of them, rulers and people are one. Persecution can now therefore begin in earnest, and the door of repentance as yet held open to them begins to close. This gives character to the last testimony of Stephen, as we shall see directly: it is a full summing up of the case against them, and adds to their crime in the death of the Lord Jesus, the witness that they always resist the Holy Spirit. The last hope is gone when this can be said.

They come upon him, and seize him, and bring him before the council,—at last with their wolfish ferocity unbridled. And here the false witnesses can amplify their assertions: "He does not cease," they affirm, "to say things against the holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered unto us."

Matter enough indeed to stir the dullest of those who have no greater boast

2 (vii. 1-53): The charge: Israel has always resisted the Spirit, and rejected her deliverers.

1 (vers. 1-8): Abraham at the beginning.

2. And the [h]high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Brethren* and fathers, hearken:

[1] The God of [i]glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, [j]Go forth from thy [k]land, and from thy [l]kindred, and come into the land that I will [m]show thee. Then went he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran. And from thence, when his [n]father had died, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him [o]no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he [p]promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when he had [q]no child. And God spake on this wise, that his seed should [r]sojourn in a strange land, and that they would bring them into [s]bondage, and treat them evil, four hundred years. And the nation to which they are in bondage will I [t]judge, said God; and after these things they shall [u]come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of [v]circumcision. And so he [w]begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac [begat] [x]Jacob, and Jacob the [y]twelve patriarchs.

* Literally, "men, brethren."

h *cf.* Matt. 26. 62. *cf.* ch. 23. 1, 2.
i Gen. 12. 1. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 3.
j *cf.* Heb. 11. 8.
k *cf.* Heb. 13. 13, 14.
l *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.
m *cf.* Ezek. 20. 6. *cf.* Heb. 11. 9, 10.
n Gen. 12. 5.
o *cf.* Heb. 11. 9, 10.
p Gen. 15. 7. Gen. 17. 8.
q Gen. 15. 3. Gen. 18. 10. *cf.* Heb. 11. 11, 12.
r Gen. 15. 13, 14. Gen. 47. 11, 12.
s Ex. 1. 8 14. *cf.* Ex. 12. 40, 41.
t Ex. 3. 19, 20.
u Ex. 14. 29, 30.
v Gen. 17. 9-14.
w Gen. 21. 1-4.
x Gen. 25. 24-26. y Gen. 29. 31, etc

than to be Moses' disciples! They look intently upon the man so accused, to see how he will bear himself, or what he will answer to such an accusation, and lo, as if he were himself Moses, his face brightens with an angelic glory! As if not seeing the lowering gloom around him, he is in the light, under the smile of God!

2. Stephen is not upon his defence. He is not answering for himself, nor pleading at all. He is the judge giving sentence. He is the still, small voice of the national conscience roused by the power of the Spirit of God. He is the memory of the people, edged and sharpened, as when called into the Presence of God. The long roll of the centuries obeys his summons, and comes forth; its record of the simplest, but with a strange new utterance; a voice of challenge and conviction, impossible to resist. If, even now, they had but hearkened to it! But man is capable of turning from known, incontestable realities, and of saying in the pride of his heart that things are as he will have them to be. Thus Israel once more turns her back upon God, and abides still under the doom which it has brought upon her.

[1] Stephen goes back to Abraham, to the father in whom they boasted, but in whom God had set before their eyes the principles which He would have them ever remember,—principles which, while the world continues what sin has made it, must ever abide as principles owned of Him and necessary for a path according to His mind. Back of law they must go to find the one in whom they had the promises,—a man justified by faith, and thus a perfect example of the grace which they so steadily refused.

"The God of glory," begins Stephen, "appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran." Thus all for him was found in One who by this marvelous vision drew him to Himself. We know that he and his were serving other gods in that land beyond the flood, (that is, Euphrates, Josh. xxiv. 2). They were involved in the idolatry in which, even then, the whole land was immersed; and there and thus grace met him. He was not the heir of privilege; and for him the glory dwelt not in any place

2 (vers. 9-16): Joseph rejected by his brethren.

2 And the patriarchs, [z]envying Joseph, [a]sold him away into Egypt; and God was with him, and [b]delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him [c]favor and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him [d]governor over Egypt and all his house. And there came a [e]famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he [f]sent out our fathers the first time. And at the [g]second time, Joseph was made known to his brethren, and Joseph's [h]family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph [i]sent and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, [j]seventy-five souls. And Jacob [k]went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, and

z Gen.37.11.
a Gen.37.28.
b Gen. 39. 2, 21-23.
c Gen.41.14-16.
d Gen. 41.38-44. Ps. 105. 17-22.
e Gen. 41.54, etc.
f Gen. 42. 1-3.
g Gen. 43.2-15. Gen. 45. 1-15.
h Gen.45.16.
i Gen.45.21-27.
j *cf.* Gen. 46. 26, 27.
k Gen. 46. 5-7.

cf. Ex. 1. 5; *cf.* Deut. 10. 22.

made with hands, but apart from the world, in which he became by the revelation henceforth a pilgrim. From the land of his birth God called him out, and from his kindred; and the land to which He called him was one unknown. Faith every way was a necessity to him; slow as he might be, and was, to sever the ties of nature, which were but hindrance to him. After his father was dead, God removed him to the land which was to be his own.

Yet here also the discipline continued, and by faith alone was the land ever enjoyed by him. Promised it was, but no foot of it made good to him; and the seed which was to inherit it came late and slowly on. Of grace, then, and of faith in the unseen, was Abraham's life a constant witness to them; and this was the life so approved of God, so honored by themselves, who yet knew so little of it!

A long sorrow also was made known to him in relation to his seed. They were again to leave the land which was theirs by promise, and to dwell in another, ill-treated, and in bondage, until 400 years had run their length. Then God would judge their oppressors, and they should come out, and serve Him in the inheritance destined for them. But for so long a time still discipline and the need of faith! They grew to a nation in that stern Egyptian school. But why the furnace covenanted to them thus? Why this need of the Refiner's fire?

It all hangs perfectly together: man under this patient but strong hand of God, ever to be watched, never to be reckoned upon. On the other hand, faith in God always therefore the one necessity, always sure amid all changes. With this, as the apostle shows, witnesses that covenant of circumcision of which Stephen thereupon speaks. Abraham is near a hundred years old, "his body now dead," nothing more to be expected from it. Just there it is that God, as the "Almighty" God, comes in to renew His assurance of what *He* will do, when Abraham can do nothing. Circumcision is "the putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11); and thus it was to him "the seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 11). Where then is the law, and all the work of man in which Israel so trusted, in the covenant given to a man with a "body now dead"? And this sign is now to be put upon all the seed of Abraham: "And so he begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs" or tribe-fathers.

Here are the principles which would have carried Israel through to blessing. Had they sat patiently at the feet of Moses even, they would have learned them from the other side. God never left Himself without witness of the characteristic marks of all that comes from Him: "Had ye believed Moses," said the Lord to them, "ye would have believed Me." And this was as true of His indirect, as of His direct testimony.

2 Stephen goes on to another part of well-known history, in which not only the fundamental untrustworthiness of man displayed itself, but in a way which

they were [l]carried over to Sychem, and laid in the [m]sepulchre which [Abraham]* bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor, the [father]† of Sychem.

3 (vers. 17-50): Moses: to whom they were set apart; the revelation and the Sanctuary.

17 But when the [n]time of the promise drew nigh, which God had promised‡ to Abraham, the people grew and [o]multiplied in Egypt; until [p]another king arose over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. This man dealt [q]subtly with our race, and evil entreated our fathers, so as to cause their infants to be cast out that they might not live. At which time [r]Moses was born, and was fair [§] unto God; and was nourished three months in his father's house. And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter [s]took him up, and brought him up for her own son. And Moses was [t]instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in his words and deeds. And when a period of forty years was fulfilled to him, it [u]came into his heart to look [‖] upon his brethren, the sons of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was being oppressed, smiting the Egyptian. And he thought that his brethren would [v]understand that God by his hand was giving them deliverance, but they understood not. And the [w]next day he appeared unto them as they strove, and urged them to peace, saying, Men,[¶] ye are

*See the note below. †Or, in Sychem. ‡The word suggests the thought of free and willing promise. §Or, "very fair." ‖Or, "visit." ¶Or, "Ye are men, brethren."

l Gen. 50. 4-13, 25.
m Gen. 23. 19, 20. *cf.* Gen. 33. 19 *cf.* Josh. 24. 32.
n cf. Ex. 2. 23-25.
o Ex. 1. 7.
p Ex. 1. 8.
q Ex. 1. 10-22.
r Ex. 2. 1-4. *cf.* Heb. 11. 23.
s Ex. 2. 5-10.
t cf. Dan. 1. 4, 17. *cf.* Is. 19. 11, 12 with 1 Cor. 1. 20.
u Ex. 2. 11, 12.
v ctr. Jno. 2. 4. *cf.* Lk. 24. 49.
w Ex. 2. 13.

was but too significant of their later rejection of their God-sent deliverers. Indeed, their latest and worst was in so many ways pictured in it that the least sensitive conscience should have been aroused by it. And this took place in the history of the first fathers of the nation, who yet wrought out in it unwittingly the purposes of God. Who could forget the envy of Joseph's brethren! which yet helped to fulfil the very premonitions of his greatness which had caused their envy. They sold him into Egypt, (did those before Stephen not remember their own thirty pieces of silver?) but God was with him, spite of those afflictions in the meantime, out of which God so signally delivered him, and made him governor over all the land. Then came the famine which compelled his guilty brethren to have recourse to him whom they had rejected and cast out. And this again led to the fulfillment of the prophecy to Abraham. Man, working freely and, alas, away from God, nevertheless wrought out His purposes as if designedly seeking their accomplishment.*

3 And now the speaker proceeds to Moses himself,—Moses whose disciples they all claimed to be, as indeed God had made him their deliverer and lawgiver; but had he in fact fared much better at their hands? Through Moses also they had received the "living oracles," and the house of God (which they had brought into his indictment) had received its initial form through him. What was the

*There is a well-known difficulty in connection with what is said of the burial of Jacob and his sons. The simplest rectification is by omitting "Abraham" from the text; which would then read "which he bought,"—referring to Jacob, and "*they* were carried over to Sychem" would refer to Jacob's sons alone; of whom we only know that Joseph was, but the tradition among the Jews was that the rest were also. "Jerome states that Paula saw the sepulchres of the rest; and Wetstein quotes Syncellus and two Jewish writers to the same purpose. The omission of Abraham is given credit to by this—that one uncial MS., ancient and of good authority, has an addition here which gives strong ground to suppose Abraham to be an interpolation." (The Irrationalism of Infidelity: being a reply to "Phases of Faith;" p. 140.)

brethren; why do ye wrong one another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, [x]Who set thee over us as ruler and judge? Wilt thou kill me, as yesterday thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses [y]fled at that saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian,* where he [z]begat two sons.

And when [a]forty years were fulfilled, there appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel in a [b]flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the vision: and as he drew nigh to behold it, there came the voice of [the] Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And Moses [c]trembled, and durst not behold. And the Lord said unto him, [d]Loose the sandal from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have surely [e]seen the ill-treatment of my people in Egypt, and have heard their groaning; and I am [f]come down to deliver them. And now come, I [g]send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they [h]denied, saying, Who

* Gk. "Madiam."

x Ex. 2. 14. *ctr.* Lk. 12. 14.
y Ex. 2. 15. *cf.* Heb. 11. 27.
z Ex. 2. 22. Ex. 18. 3, 4.
a *cf.* Nu. 14. 33, 34. *cf.* Matt. 4. 1, 2.
b Ex. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Lk. 20. 37, 38.
c *cf.* Heb. 12. 21. Ex. 3. 6.
d Ex. 3, 4, 5. *cf.* Josh. 5. 15.
e Ex. 3. 7. Ex. 2. 23-25.
f Ex. 3. 8. *cf.* Jno. 6. 38-40. *ctr.* Gen. 11. 5-7.
g Ex. 3. 10. Ps. 105. 26.
h ver. 27. *cf.* Judg. 11. 7. *cf.* 1Sa. 17. 28.

testimony of history again as to all this? He brings forward no reasoning of his own; nothing that they could for a moment deny: the facts are a sufficient argument. But he goes more leisurely through these, as if he would have them marshal their cumulative evidence well, and compel the attention of his unwilling listeners. It is as if, not he, but Moses himself had turned to be their accuser; as the Lord had before declared to them that he was; and that they were going on with such an adversary to the judgment. The judgment now was really come, and the Judge was about to deliver them to the officer, that they might be cast into prison:—a prison from which (although the doors are about to open) they have never come forth yet.

The birth of Moses was in one of the disastrous times of Israel's history. The destruction of their male children threatened their very existence as a nation; and as one of these doomed ones, he was only saved by the signal interposition of God, who shelters him in the bosom of the persecutor. As the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter he is taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and becomes mighty in words and deeds. Scripture says nothing elsewhere of this education of his, but much of the divine discipline by which he became the fit ruler of the people of God. Stephen mentions, perhaps, his greatness, to exhibit the more the power of that love which made him renounce it all to identify himself with a rabble of serfs, and set himself in opposition to all the wealth and power and civilization of the foremost nation of the day. Perfectly he knew all that his choice implied; but he saw Him who was invisible, who was lost to the Egyptians amid their bestial deities; and "it came into his heart to look upon his brethren, the sons of Israel." God was looking upon them, as he was; and the spirit of the deliverer awoke within him. Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was being oppressed, and smote the Egyptian. He thought that his brethren would understand that by him God was giving deliverance to Israel; but they understood not. The love that had brought him to renounce for their sakes the place in which he had been so wonderfully put by God, was not appreciated; and when he would have united and set them at one, he was in their mind only assuming without warrant the place of a ruler and judge over them. He had to flee with his work unaccomplished, and become a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he found other attachments, and became the father of children.

set thee as ruler and judge? this man did God send as a ruler and redeemer, with the hand of the [i]angel who appeared to him in the bush. *He* brought them out, having done [j]wonders and signs in Egypt, and at the [k]Red Sea, and in the [l]wilderness forty years. This is that Moses who [m]said unto the sons of Israel, A Prophet will God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me.* This is he who was in the [n]assembly in the wilderness, with the [o]angel who spake unto him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received [p]living oracles to give unto us. To whom our fathers would not be [q]subject, but thrust him from them, and in their [r]hearts turned [back] unto Egypt; saying unto Aaron, Make us [s]gods who shall go before us; for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what hath happened to him. And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and [t]rejoiced in the works of their own hands. And God turned, and [u]delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book

* Or, "as He raised me." Some add, "Him shall ye hear."

i *cf.* Ex. 14. 19.
j Ex. chs.7-12. Ps.78.43-51.
k Ex. 14. Ps. 106. 9.
l Deut. 8.15. Ps. 78. 15, etc.
m Deut. 18. 15. ch. 3.22, 23.
n *cf.* Ex.16.1. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 22. 23.
o vers.35,53. *cf.* Is. 63. 9.
p *cf.* Rom.3. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 9. 4, 5.
q *cf.* Ps. 95. 8–11.
r *cf.* Gen.19. 17. *cf.* Ex.16.3.
s Ex. 32. 1, etc.
t Ex.32.6,18. *ctr.* Ps.66.6.
u *cf.* Judg.2. 11-14. *cf.* Rom. 1. 24, 28.

No doubt there was that in Moses that needed the discipline; and at the back-side of the desert he got training that he needed for the work which after all he was to do. God is over all, and through all, and in all. Thus all can be accepted as of Him, and one can see His hand in that which is nevertheless the sin of man, and done in opposition to Him. In the people there was no preparedness of heart, no generous response to the devotedness that would have served them, no perception of the mind of God at all. Their appointed deliverer they drove out among strangers, as Israel were doing now with One who had come down from a more wonderful height, with attestation from God beyond all that ever had been given before, and to accomplish a much mightier deliverance. But the warning was plain that that Moses in whom now they boasted had been for forty years an outcast from the people who had yet to own that God indeed had raised him up to be their ruler and their judge.

Stephen pursues the story of how to that rejected man there came the commission from God, sealed with the broad seal of wonders and signs which accredited in that day to another generation what now no miraculous signs, with how much that went far beyond them, could accredit. In the flame of fire in a bush unburnt, Jehovah had manifested Himself to him, tremble though he might as he stood barefoot in His presence, to send him back, His messenger, into Egypt. How unlike indeed to the glory that had so lately been displayed among them, where He who was sent was One with Him who sent Him,—the glory of the Father's Son!

Yet Moses accomplished His work; as Egypt and the Red Sea and the desert witnessed. They believed in Moses now! Was it not he who said, "A prophet will God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me"?

From him came the living oracles,—the voice of Him who had been speaking to them ever since. He whom they rashly accused of blasphemy against Moses, clears himself from any possible imputation of irreverence as to what had spoken to his own soul as that. But for Israel, alas! how had Israel, encompassed with all those daily manifestations of divine power and grace of which their history bore witness,—how had Israel treated Moses? How had they treated that Greater Presence that went with them then? It was all written in those records of theirs, so well-known by them, so little fruitful in them. Were they subject?

of the [v]prophets, Have ye offered me victims and sacrifices, O house of Israel, forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the [w]tent of Moloch, and the [x]star of [your]* god Remphan,† the figures which ye made to worship them; and I will [y]carry you away beyond Babylon. The [z]tent of testimony was with our fathers in the wilderness, as he that spake to Moses commanded to make it after the [a]pattern which he had seen. Which also our fathers, receiving from their predecessors,‡ [b]brought in with Joshua, when they took possession of the nations, whom God [c]thrust out from before the face of our fathers,—until the days of David, who found [d]favor before God, and asked to find a tabernacle§ for

* Some omit. † Or, Rephan

‡ This is one word in the original, διαδεξάμενοι, "receiving by transmission."

§ A different word from "tent," suggesting a permanent abode.

v Am. 5. 25–27.
w *ctr.* Ex. 25. 8. *cf.* Lev. 20. 2, 3.
x *ctr.* Ex. 13. 20, 21. *ctr.* Nu. 24. 17.
y *cf.* 2 Chro. 36. 11–21. *cf.* Jer. 25. 9–12.
z Ex. 40. 1, etc.
a Ex. 25. 9, 40.
b Josh. 18. 1.
c Josh. 23. 9. ch. 13. 19.
d *cf.* 1 Sam. 13. 14. *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 1. *cf.* Ps. 132. 1–5.

Let their molten god bear witness! Let Jehovah's neglected altars, all those forty years, while those of Moloch and Remphan steamed with profane offerings! And there, as Amos declares in the name of the Lord, their captivity had already been decided.* How this shows the unity of the nation morally all through their history! for their heart felt turning to God at any time would have brought about the rescinding of that judgment which the prophet thus declares had been continually impending over them.

The tent of testimony began also in the wilderness the history of that dwelling-place of God among them, which furnished another count in the indictment of the fearless disciple. Moses had received the pattern, and made it as directed; and it had come into the land with Joshua, when God cast out the nations from before His people. Of how much might the mere mention of its tarrying time remind them, until David prepared for, and Solomon built the House which with its chequered history, and so long now in its tenantless condition, they clung to yet. But whatever it might be, did they think it, then, so adequate a dwelling for the Creator of all? Solomon himself had asked with wonder, whether He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain could be indeed contained in the house that he had builded. And God Himself had asked by the prophet a similar question. How poor and unworthy was in fact that reverence for the house by those who had cast out and slain the Son of the Father,—Him whose glory Isaiah had seen filling it!

At the thought of that, the light upon that radiant face seems to kindle into an awful glow of fire. The love of God poured out upon the people of His choice, met but by the enmity of apostate hearts, which had tasted only to harden themselves against it, stirs to passionate outbreak a heart that has with its whole energy responded to it. He rebukes them as not the Israel of God, but stubborn and uncircumcised Gentiles in heart and ears. They had always,—and now how fatally,—resisted the gracious strivings of the Holy Spirit, in one unbroken succession of ungodly men. Had he spoken to them by prophets? which of these had not been the victims of their malicious rage? They had slain the messengers who had but announced the coming of the Righteous One; and He having come, they had now gone on to be His betrayers and His murderers! Law!—they might talk of law! They had received it, indeed, at the hands of angels; but they had never kept it.

* Amos v. 25–27. Stephen follows, in general here, the text of the Septuagint, which substitutes Remphan for the "Chiun" of the Hebrew; for what reason seems not to be clear. For "beyond Damascus," in the prophet, Stephen, interpreting by the history, says "beyond Babylon."

the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a [e]house. Howbeit the Most High [f]dwelleth not in [places] made with hands; as saith the [g]prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what is* the house that ye will build me, saith [the] Lord; or what is the place of my rest? hath not my hand [h]made all these things?

Ye [i]stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! ye do always [j]resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the [k]prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they have slain those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom *ye* are now become the betrayers and the [l]murderers! who have received the law as ordinances of [m]angels, and have not kept it.

3 (54-60): Heaven opened, and Jesus in the glory of God.

3. And when they heard these things, they were [n]cut to the heart, and they gnashed upon him with their

* Literally, "what kind of house."

[e] 2 Sam. 7. 1-13. 1 Ki. 8. 20.
[f] ch. 17. 24.
[g] Is. 66. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 27.
[h] Ps. 102. 25-27. Ps. 104.
[i] Ex. 32. 9. *cf.* Is. 48. 4.
[j] *cf.* Gen. 6. 3. *ctr.* Eph. 4. 30.
[k] Jer. 2. 30. Matt. 23. 34-36. Lk. 20. 9-15.
[l] ch. 2. 23.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 68. 17. *cf.* Gal. 3. 19.
[n] *ctr.* ch. 2. 37. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.

3. Was it not true? There was nothing in it all, but the simplest facts of history, the unimpeached, unimpeachable testimony of writers held by themselves for inspired men. Not even a comment had been given, not an application made, until the full tale to which they had listened was complete. Then at last the verdict had been pronounced, none other than which could possibly have been given. Their consciences bore witness in the lightning flash of conviction which cut them to the heart. Yes, it was true; that was the maddening, if not the overwhelming reality: and stubborn with Satanic pride, they were not overwhelmed, but maddened: "They gnashed upon him with their teeth." It was like a defiant hell; though hell will not be defiant.

On the other side, heaven opens upon its martyr —surely martyr now! Filled with the Spirit, he looks up with eager intentness, out of the fast darkening earth to the place whence the light of God, breaking through the mists, had lighted up his face with radiance. But now, as he looks, there is no mist at all, but a way opened through to the uttermost glory; and there He of whom he had testified is revealed to him, standing at the right hand of God. There are no receptive hearts to which to utter it; but he cannot keep back the closing testimony vouchsafed him. Hear it or not, the testimony must be given. Eager, impassioned, triumphant, "Behold," he says, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God."

They will have no more! As out of the mouth of the pit, comes the shriek of frenzied opposition: "they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him." Israel has given her answer to the appeal of God, and in the light of the open heavens, they slay His witness. The trial of the nation with this is ended.

Yet out of the darkness there is permitted to us here one reminder of transcendant grace: "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was *Saul*."

There is nothing to be said of him yet; we are turned from him to him who has now fought the good fight, and has finished his course, for whom his crown of victory is reserved: "They stoned Stephen invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Witness he is to the last; and most so when wholly unconscious of it he has beheld the glory of his Lord with open face, and is changed by it into the same image, from glory to glory:—undying glory in a dying face! "And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And having said this, he fell asleep."

teeth. But he, [o]being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into [p]heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, Behold, I see the [q]heavens opened, and the [r]Son of man standing at the right hand of God. And they cried out with a loud voice, and [s]stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast him [t]out of the city, and [u]stoned him. And the [v]witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking,* and saying, Lord Jesus, [w]receive my spirit! And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, [x]lay not this sin to their charge! And having said this, he [y]fell asleep.

o ch. 6. 5.
p *cf.* ch.1.10, 11.
q *cf.* Matt.3. 16.
cf. ch. 9. 3.
*cf.*Heb.2.9.
r *cf.* Jno.12. 34.
*cf.*Matt.25. 31.
s *cf.* Matt. 13. 15.
*cf.*ch.22.22.
t *cf.*Lk.4.29.
cf. Heb.13. 12.
*cf.*Jno.9.34.
u Matt. 21. 35.
cf. Lev. 24. 13–16.
v *cf.* Deut. 13. 9, 10.
cf. Deut.17. 7.

* There is no object after this, but the thought is, "Calling upon the Lord Jesus as God."

ch. 8. 1; ch. 22. 20. w *cf.* Lk. 23. 46; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19. x *cf.* Lk. 23. 34; *cf.* Matt. 5. 44. y *cf.* Lk. 8. 52; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.

How plainly through all this is the fore-gleam of what is just at hand! Only in the language of Saul, the present persecutor,—of Paul, the apostle as he is soon to be,—do we find adequate expression for the spiritual interpretation of the last moments of the dying Stephen. He was to see for himself, through the wondrous grace of God, what Stephen had seen and testified. But in Stephen himself he had seen that transforming power of the glory of Christ, of which he speaks in the words that have been quoted from him. Was he not looking back in them to such a scene as we know never passed from his remembrance? True, he had raged against it then. All the deeper would be his remembrance of it now. Paul is in many ways Stephen revived; and thus what the imprint of Stephen's death would make him. Certainly there was here the anticipation of that "gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4), which was, in a special sense, his gospel. Fitting it was that the awful cloud which closed in darkness Israel's day of grace, should be banded with the brightness of the day that was to follow. The fulness of God's grace, and His manifold wisdom were to be told out now in the Church in its new and heavenly relationships,—mysteries that had been hid from ages and generations, but are now made manifest to the saints (Col. i. 26). In Stephen's vision we have not as yet, of course, the Church, but the Son of man in heaven, which He has opened by His presence there; Heaven fixing the gaze and beckoning the feet of the saints by the Object revealed there. Judaism is thus ended for us; the law with its unrent veil is set aside; and the way is opened for Jew and Gentile to be brought together as heirs of a better inheritance than the law could speak of.

But even now this will only gradually be realized; and the riches of grace will only by degrees pass into the actual possession of those to whom they are destined.

Div. 2.

The death of Stephen was the definite rejection of Christ on the part of the nation. It closed on God's side the last attempt to get fruit from the fig-tree of the vineyard, according to the parable (Luk. xiii. 8, 9). There was no remedy now, nor hope of averting the sentence pronounced, that it should be cut down; and for this the Roman axe had long been sharpening. There remained still—and remain—the promises of God to be made good to a future generation; which grace will fulfil, but of which no particular one can claim fulfilment. Meanwhile He has other purposes, for the accomplishment of which even the blessing of the earth (inseparably bound up with Israel's) may well wait,—purposes which are to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in Christ.

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. viii.–xii.)

Israel rejecting, but the Church enlarging; the barriers between Jew and Gentile broken down.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. viii. 1–25.)

The free choice of the Spirit: individuality and independence.

1 (1-4): The overruling hand of God.

1. AND [z]Saul was in* agreement with his taking away. And there arose at that time a great [a]persecution of the assembly that was in Jerusalem; and they were

z ch. 7. 58.
a *ctr.* ch. 2. 47.

* agreeing to.

and His manifold wisdom, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. ii. 7; iii. 10).

Thus the setting aside of Israel only leaves room for the increase and development of the Church already formed, but needing yet to know itself as the vessel of this display. The unfolding begins now at once; although with a slowness, for which the history of all previous revelations might well have prepared us. Successive communications, and by various instruments, have always been the method which God has employed, as Scripture, in every part of it, is witness to us. We may be able to see but little the reason of this; although we may be sure that there is profoundest wisdom in it. Nor is this the place to enquire as to the general meaning of the divine ways in this respect. In the case before us, however, we may easily discern how gently, one by one, the bonds are broken which held the people of God to a system such as Judaism was; a system of divine institution, although in accommodation to the need—in fact the self-sufficiency—of man, and not the expression of what was in His own heart. These ties to it are therefore hindrances, which a deeper apprehension of God, or even of themselves, would bring deliverance from, and which the lack of deliverance will make formidable, and yet, with their apparent sanctions they cannot be too rudely broken through. We shall see how thoroughly yet how tenderly this is done; although the history here does not complete the deliverance; above all, does not give the full spiritual account of it, for which we must go to the epistles.

The present division shows the breaking down of the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, by the reception of Gentiles into the assembly; although questions will come up for settlement afterwards, as we find in the fifteenth chapter with regard to the observance of the law of Moses. We see too the freer action of the Spirit of God, in those outside the original apostles. There is another reason for this in the need of the initiative being plainly taken by God Himself, in some sort even apart from these, who are very plainly under the influence of Jewish prejudices which the younger disciples, and perhaps less weighted with the responsibilities of their position, are the more ready to break through.

SUBD. 1.

The Spirit, as we know, has come, and in signs and miracles of power is testifying to the Risen Christ. But until Stephen, and apart from speaking with tongues and prophesying, these seem to have been confined to the apostles themselves (chap. ii. 43; v. 12). With Stephen, who is used of God to give the final testimony to the rulers of the Jews, and in whom appears the anticipation of the impending change, the "wonders and great signs" seem more the fruit of faith and grace with which he is filled. Yet even in Stephen there might appear to be a connection of these with the office given to him, to which he had been set apart by apostolic hands. Now this is to be quite manifestly altered; the time for the free action of the Spirit has come; and He is to be seen as the true Vicar of Christ upon earth, not only energizing, but disposing and directing. Although there has been no doctrine of it yet, the Body of Christ is formed;

all [b]scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And [c]devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul [d]ravaged the assembly, entering into every house,* and dragging off both men and women, deliv-

* Or, "house after house."

b ch. 11. 19. *cf.* ch. 1. 8 with Phil. 1. 12.
c *cf.* Lk. 23. 48, 50.
d ch. 9. 1. ch.26.10,11. *cf.*1Cor.15.9. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 13.

and the various gifts which this implies manifest themselves under the constraint of divine love, in the various ability of which their possessors become conscious in the ministry to which love moves. For the possession of the gift brings the responsibility to use it;—a responsibility which is, first of all, to God. The gift is a "manifestation;" and "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. xii. 7). The simple rule, intelligible to all, of imparting for the need anywhere what each might have to supply it with,—the adaptation in spiritual things of the rule with which they began in temporal things,—this they found amply sufficient, under the Spirit's guidance, as the general principle of service; which the apostle formulates for them afterwards in the exhortation that "as every one has received the gift," they were "so to minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10). This is the principle of a "body,"—a living organism; in which there is no useless member, but the individuality of each one is maintained; individuality without independency,—things which are contradictory of one another: to affirm the latter, as to deny the former, is equally to destroy the thought of the body altogether.

There was no doctrine of the body of Christ as yet. The love that united these disciples to one another taught them the practice doubtless; just as it taught them in temporal things not to say that anything was their own. There was no law to prohibit such ministry as any one was capable of; and they would no doubt have thought such a law as unreasonable in one case as in the other.

While all were thus free to minister, there was of course an inspired teaching which was carefully distinguished from all other. "They continued," it was said of these early disciples, "in the apostles' doctrine." There were men accredited as appointed and qualified of the Lord to lay the foundations on which, and according to which, all the building was to be. As yet there were probably not even the rudiments of any New Testament Scriptures; although one could not say that there was no beginning of such attempts at relation of things most surely believed as Luke afterwards refers to, encouraging his more perfect account. Who can say when Matthew began to write? But all must be the merest conjecture as to this. While yet at Jerusalem, with so many living witnesses as were around them, the need for written records would not be felt as afterwards; and yet it is hard to think that with the intense interest attaching to events then fresh in so many memories, there would be even then no effort to preserve these with the accuracy that writing alone could ensure.

But God had taken care that "scriptures" the infant Church should possess from the beginning; scriptures by which the words of the primitive evangelists would be, and were (with the emphatic approbation of the inspired historian) carefully tested. These Old Testament Scriptures had, as we know, been opened by the Lord Himself after His resurrection to others beside the apostles, and their understandings also opened to understand them. Under such teaching, and with this divine assistance, how much of New Testament truth would they be able to anticipate in those "living oracles" of which Stephen speaks, and which, all through His life on earth, the Lord so constantly referred to and upheld. It is not even yet needless to insist upon the honor which God has always put upon His written Word, even in days in which there were inspired teachers in the Church; who themselves, as we see, constantly referred to it. The Church never taught: it was rather that which was to be profited by teach-

ered them to prison. They, therefore, who were scattered abroad went through [the countries] telling the
[e] glad tidings of the word.
2 (5-13): The Samaritans believe.
2. Now [f] Philip went down to [the]* city of Samaria,

e ver. 1.
f ch.6.5.

* Or, "a": though MSS. differ.

ing. It was at all times in subjection to Scripture, not above it; as were also its inspired teachers. What cause have we for thanksgiving for that which puts into every hand that by which alone the apostolic rule can be observed, to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good!"

1. At this juncture, when the Church is beginning, (as yet, one may say, unconsciously,) her exodus from the Jewish limitations in which, as yet, she had been held, God manifests His overruling power in a very striking way. The tiger-spirit in people and rulers, which had been restrained hitherto, that the new-born child might gather strength, is permitted now to manifest itself; and having tasted blood in Stephen's martyrdom, rages against the followers of the Lord. The Church at Jerusalem is scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, with the notable exception of those whom the priests and rulers had most cause to dread! The apostles, guided of God, no doubt, alone remain. The seed of the gospel is thus scattered abroad, presently to spring up with plentiful fruit; while the absence of the apostles necessitates the rising up of new leaders in these various movements. All are cast with more simplicity upon God alone, to learn as the unfailing consequence, each for himself, the resources that are in Him. The weaning-time of Isaac is fairly begun; though unbelieving Ishmael may mock the more; all which will only hasten the casting out of the bondwoman and her seed.

On the other hand Saul is seen in the very forefront of the persecution, ravaging the flock. Who could have foreseen that here the great apostle of the Gentiles was also getting his education in the omnipotent wisdom of God? But so it was. A Pharisee of the Pharisees was learning in himself, in the most effectual way possible, the spirit of Pharisaism; while he was sharpening the axe which was to smite his self-righteousness to the ground, and prepare him as the chief of sinners to be the humblest of scholars in Christ's school of grace. Thus God works! How marvelous are His workings! How well we may trust Him to carry out His purposes for the glory of Christ! Saul is already helping to scatter the seed which by and by he will be foremost in sowing. Now he is in agreement with Stephen's being taken away; yet the glory in Stephen's face is to have its part in his own transformation into another witness to the Son of man at the right hand of God; himself converted by the gospel of that glory!

The martyr too is buried by devout men, who without being as yet Christians, are penetrated with the sense of the mockery of all justice in his cruel death, and are thus brought into indignant opposition to the heads of their own nation. We may see in them how the blood of the martyrs will be the seed of the Church, as after-generations have proved abundantly. Here too God is working: defeat is victory, and the dead are workers still. They have not failed, who have fertilized the soil of the gospel with their life-blood. The Church is scattered; and those who are thus sent abroad proclaim, with all the emphasis of their suffering undergone for Him, the value to them of the Christ to whom they testify. Who could bribe these tongues to silence, when the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon the confessors of His Name, the more endeared to them? How could the "glad tidings of the Word" find better evangelists?

2. It is in this connection that another of the Seven comes before us, Philip, next named after Stephen, whom we find now, his office at Jerusalem having come to an end by reason of the persecution, preaching Christ in Samaria, among a people with whom (as another has said) law had failed utterly as always. The Gospel of John has shown us the Lord already there, and many believing through His word; while in the beginning of the Acts itself He names

and preached unto them the Christ. And the multitude with one accord gave [g] heed to the things spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs that he did. For from many who had [h] unclean spirits, they came out,* crying with a loud voice; and many who were [i] paralysed, and who were [j] lame, were healed. And there was great [k] joy in the city. Now there had been before in the city a certain man named Simon, who

[g] *ctr.* ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 16. 14. *cf.* Jno. 4. 36-38.
[h] *cf.* Mk. 16. 17. *cf.* ch. 16. 16-18.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 5. 18, etc.
[j] *cf.* ch. 3. 2, etc.
[k] *cf.* Lk. 19. 37. *cf.* ch. 16. 34.

* If the stronger reading is to be followed, the literal rendering would be a broken sentence, the subject changed—"many of those who had unclean spirits—they came out."

distinctly, after Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria as a place in which the apostles were to be His witnesses (chap. i. 8). Hitherto, however, it had not been visited by them; and we can understand how the reception of disciples from that schismatic region, with which the Jews had not even ordinary dealings, as the woman of Sychar reminded the Lord, would have created difficulty which it might have been hard for Jews to meet. Now, when driven out from Jerusalem, the opposition there seemingly hopeless to be surmounted, these circumcised worshippers of the One God could hardly fail to be among the first thought of, with the Lord's example and His word before them. Samaria accordingly is the first place now to be evangelized.

"The opinion," says Lechler, "that this Philip was one of the twelve, was entertained already by Polycrates in the second century, by the authors of the Apostolical Constitutions, in the third century, and by others; it was suggested not only by the sameness of the name, but probably also by the special character of the labors of Philip, since these appear to be such as the apostles exclusively performed. This latter view seems, indeed, to be sustained by the expression, 'he preached (*ekerusse*) the Christ;' inasmuch as it was originally applied to the proclamation of a herald, and denotes therefore here that a public declaration was made in a more than ordinarily solemn manner, and by special authority, while in the case of others, merely the terms *euangelizesthai* [evangelizing] (viii. 4; xi. 20) and *lalein ton logon* [speaking the word] were employed. The evangelizing labors of Philip, therefore, undoubtedly seem to be of a different kind from those of the latter. But they do not on this account assume a decidedly *apostolical* character, in which case *didaskein* or *didache* [teach, teaching] would have been the term employed, as in iv. 2, 18; v. 25, 28, 42; comp. ii. 42. The word *kerussein*, in the present verse, constitutes, as it were, an intermediate grade, or occupies a position between the specifically apostolical *didaskein* and the general Christian *euangelizesthai*, or *lalein ton logon*. This view is in the strictest accordance with the opinion that Philip was one of the Seven, as these men really did occupy an intermediate position in their respective relations to the apostles, and to the disciples in general." (*See Lange's Commentary: the Acts*).

If such, indeed, is the language of the Word, it is right that we all should understand it. We must agree with Lechler that the Philip here spoken of is not the apostle, and for the double reason that the connection shows that the apostles were at this time all at Jerusalem, and because the visit of Peter and John to Samaria afterwards is inexplicable if Philip were of the same standing with themselves. As to the rest, there is no ground for the attempted distinction. Apostles "taught" indeed, and with peculiar authority; but they also "preached" (chap. ix. 20; x. 42; xx. 25, etc.), "evangelized" (chap. viii. 25; xiv. 7, 15, 21, etc.), and "spoke the Word" (viii. 25; xiv. 25, etc). The word used with regard to Philip here, and which means "to publish, or proclaim," is used with regard to those who preached Christ of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to Paul's bonds (Phil. i. 16); and also with regard to the leper's publication of his leprosy which the Lord had healed, but where assuredly he

used [l]magic arts, and astonished the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was some great one. To whom they had all given heed, from small to great, saying, This is the [m]power of God which is called great. And they gave heed to him because that for a long time they had been astonished at his magic arts. But when they [n]believed Philip preaching the glad tidings concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were [o]baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself [p]believed; and having been baptized, remained constantly* with Philip, and was

* Or, "gave strict heed to."

l cf. ch.13.6-11. *cf.* ch.19.13-16. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 7-12.
m cf. Matt. 24. 24. *cf.* Jno.5.43.
n cf. ch. 13. 38, 39.
o ch.2.38,41. vers. 36,38 ch.10.47,48.
p cf. Jno. 2. 23–25. *cf.* Matt.13. 20, 21.

had no "special authority" to do so, but on the contrary, was expressly *forbidden* by the Lord (Mk. i. 45). While as for the "teaching," said to be "specifically apostolical," it is the word used when Christians generally are exhorted to be "teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. iii. 16). It seems even impossible to believe that Lechler means to assure us that there were no rightful teachers except the apostles! Yet his words seem to have no meaning, if they do not mean this.

The whole interest of such arguments clearly is in support of the claim which used to be more openly advocated than at present, that all preaching should be in the hands of a special class of men ordained for this, to which Philip could be then assigned, because of apostolic hands laid upon him; ignoring the fact which is so plain in the history here, that Philip was set apart, with the rest of the Seven, to "serve tables," and that there is no such thought as that of ordaining to preach or teach,—by apostles or any other,—in all the New Testament. We are not going out of our way now, to take this up; but we must not shun what purport to be arguments from the word of God, as to this or any other matter.

The signs which accompanied Philip's preaching were never granted to all; and as intended to bear witness to the Risen Lord, naturally would go with the proclamation of the Word. At first, they seem, for the same reason doubtless, to have been confined to the apostles, to whom was confided a special testimony to the Resurrection. The wider sphere in which now this testimony was going out would imply a corresponding enlargement in the range of such conferments. There is nothing apparently in this which demands very special explanation. God was acting in all this for the glory of Christ, and in behalf of the gospel of His grace which was now about to shine out in deeper, fuller, sweeter significance than it had ever exhibited before.

The miracles at once gain the attention of the people; but only as making way for the Word, which holds them. The power over unclean spirits is marked; and Samaria appears in more than this respect as largely under the power of the enemy, spite of its professed worship of the true God. It may well be that the truth which had begun to work among them had stirred up special resistance on the part of one who knew its power; and Simon the sorcerer had been his special agent to distract and turn away the minds of the Samaritans from the truth. He had dazzled them with a wonder-working, the source of which he was content mysteriously to hint at as some preternatural greatness in himself, which left their imaginations to go further than his cautious claim. For them he came to be "The power of God which is called great;" but before the true power of God all this collapsed, and a great mass of the people followed Christ, and were baptized, both men and women.

A more notable thing follows. The stronghold of Satan's power is itself shaken, and Simon the sorcerer becomes by conviction and profession a disciple of Christ! Simon also himself believed, and having been baptized, remains

astonished, [q]beholding the signs and great works of power that took place.

3 (14–17): The Spirit given.

3. Now when the [r]apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, having come down, prayed for them that they might receive [the] Holy Spirit. For as yet he was [s]not fallen upon any of them; only they were baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they [t]laid their hands on them, and they received [the] Holy Spirit.

q cf. Jno. 4. 48. *cf.* Lk. 16. 31.

r ver. 1. *cf.* Jno. 4. 22.

s ch. 2. 38.

t cf. ch. 19. 6. *cfr.* ch. 10. 44–48.

constantly with Philip, as much astonished as he had astonished others, beholding the signs and great works of power taking place. So, apparently, the gospel had triumphed everywhere; in a sense, had done so; but it had to be realized that even victories of the truth in a world fallen away from God, are not always or wholly the triumphs that they seem.

3. Spite of the power manifested, and the joyful reception of the gospel in so many hearts, there was still a lack among these baptized believers which must have been felt greatly. The testimony at Jerusalem had been, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And so it came to pass. But at Samaria, where the conditions then announced had been evidently fulfilled, the effect did not follow: "as yet the Spirit was not fallen upon any of them." It was not simply an absence of the signs that then followed those who believed. It was not only that the gifts failed, but the "Gift." Manifestations of the Spirit regularly declared the Spirit's presence; but here they were absent; and the inconceivably greater Gift—that of the Spirit itself,—had not been conferred.

That this was the Pentecostal gift none can surely doubt; and the Lord Himself defines this as the Baptism of the Spirit (chap. i. 5). The apostle Paul assures us that by this we are brought into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13). This is certainly neither the effect nor the accompaniment of water baptism, as with the ritualists: for at Pentecost the hundred and twenty were not baptized with water, and the converts here in Samaria had all both faith and baptism, yet had not the Spirit. Moreover, while in Jerusalem baptism was a prerequisite, in the case of the Gentiles afterwards the Spirit fell on them *before* the baptism (chap. x. 47). Thus every way there have been distinguished for us things which should never have been confounded. The analogy between them manifestly is, that as water-baptism introduces into the outer sphere of profession, so that of the Spirit introduces into the inner circle of the Church of God.

With new birth or conversion it would again seem almost impossible to confound the Pentecostal Gift. The apostles were neither converted nor born again at Pentecost, but long before; and the Samaritan believers were likewise, as in every other case, converted first.

Finally, the gifts received for testimony were quite distinct from that indwelling of the Spirit personally which the Lord emphasizes for us in the Gospel of John as that which would be the result of His going to the Father (Jno. xiv. 20; xvi. 7). Signs and works of power the disciples had been commissioned to do before (Matt. x. 8), and many others had done them in Old Testament times.

It only remains to enquire why the gift of the Spirit should be delayed in the case of the Samaritans, and why it should have been communicated by means of the apostles. We have not heard of the latter at Jerusalem, nor do we in the case of Cornelius and his friends; a thing which again quite overthrows the ideas which ritualism has associated with it. We find nothing like an ordinance which could only thus be administered, but on the contrary, a quite exceptional dealing with the Samaritans, repeated, as far as we know, but in one case (chap. xix. 6). The rule among Gentiles seems to have been different (Gal. iii. 5).

4 (18–25): Simon exposed.

4. But Simon, seeing that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the [Holy]* Spirit was given, offered them [u]money, saying, Give me also this authority that, on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive [the] Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy money go with thee to [v]destruction, because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be obtained by money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy [w]heart is not

[u] *cf.* Matt. 26. 14 16. *cf.* ch. 3. 6.

[v] *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 16, 26, 27. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.

[w] *cf.* Matt. 15. 8, 19. *cf.* Jude 4.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit.

And if apostles' hands were indeed necessary for such a communication, where are the apostles, authenticated as the early apostles were, by whose hands alone it can be effected? Thank God that He has not tied His grace to anything of this kind!

With regard to Gentiles also, the necessity of baptism as a prerequisite is done away. Who will assert that in the very first case of their admission to the Church the link between things which God intended to be kept united could be thus broken through? Baptism for those who had openly rejected the Lord as come to them would be there an open reception of Him,—the fit accompaniment of that repentance which was now preached to them in His Name. Here also, where there had been a long schismatic denial of the city and house of God at Jerusalem, that this should be ended by the acknowledgment on their part of Jerusalem in those who had to come from Jerusalem to communicate the Gift which they so imperatively needed, seems in keeping with His ways. For, as the Law pointed forward to the gospel, the necessity of which it so distinctly showed, so does the gospel in its turn confirm the Law. God's dispensations have one common Author, who is to be acknowledged in them all. The Gentiles were a people "without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12), but a circumcised and orthodox nation must own the institutions of the God they worshiped. All seems here consistent and in place.

4. But the wondrous Gift, while perfecting the true disciples in what they lacked, unveils the unhappy Simon as still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Wondering at this new power displayed, he covets for himself the ability to bestow it, and would make merchandise of the divine vouchsafement; it was in full reality,—even in the extremest form of it,—the "trader in the House of the Lord" (Zech. xiv. 21),—the sin of which Christ had indignantly purged His Father's House, and of which Judas himself was but the highest expression. What was afterwards called "simony" was necessarily a feebler manifestation of the same spirit, which may take forms, moreover, not covered by this word. The carnal mind intruding into divine things will necessarily seek to use them for fleshly advantage;—necessarily, for it knows nothing better: the only full victory over it is with him who has found in Christ Himself the satisfaction which frees him from self-enslavement, and makes it a delight henceforth to pour out upon His feet its most precious ointment.

The fervid heart of Peter bursts forth at this offer on the part of a professed disciple, and he denounces it with terrible severity, as if to prevent the possibility of any recurrence of so great a crime. "Thy money go with thee to destruction," he says, "because thou hast thought that the Gift of God might be obtained with money." It was indeed a bold attempt on the part of Satan, if it were not too foolish to be taken as one of his, to regain the ground that he had lost in Samaria. He had in fact insulted the Lord in as evil a fashion in the temptation in the wilderness; and in his worst malice his utter folly is most manifested too. And this poor tool of his, who had seemed to have escaped from his hand, had only demonstrated now how near it was possible to come to the Saviour and His salvation without ever having really "part or lot in the matter" of the Holy Spirit at all. The apostle urges upon him, therefore, repentance and supplication to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be

upright before God. [x] Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and supplicate the Lord, if indeed the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee: for I see thee to be in the [y] gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Do ye supplicate the Lord for me, that [z] nothing may come upon me of the things of which thou hast spoken.

They, therefore, having testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached* the glad tidings to [a] many villages of the Samaritans.

x *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

y *cf.* Deut. 29. 18, 19. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5.

z *cf.* Ex. 9. 28. *cf.* Lk 16. 24. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.

a *cf.* ch. 1. 8.

* Or, "continued preaching."

forgiven. The doubt arises, not from the limitation of divine mercy, but rather from the hardened condition of the man himself, whom he cannot but regard as in the bitterness of gall itself, and as in the bond (some would say, "bundle") of iniquity. Nothing of all that he had seen and owned as to the power of God manifest there, and bowing so many souls before God, had changed him from the sorcerer he had been before, who would now but use the wondrous power he was witness to, to bring men under his own control and make himself to others the centre which he was to himself! This is man still, with the devil's deceit clinging to him, "Ye shall be as God;"—which was in this way, that, as there cannot be two Gods, man must *displace* God, and reign himself in the empty throne! Antichrist at the end will be the full exemplification of this; and, as the Lord intimated to the Jews, for those who refuse Him who comes in His Father's Name, the alternative must be that they will receive Antichrist. He is only the incarnation of their own desires, although like Saul of old he may be a head and shoulders taller than any of his followers.

Simon's answer to the apostle shows that, though alarmed, there is no repentance with him. He asks that they would supplicate the Lord that nothing of the things of which they have spoken may come upon him. He is alarmed as to what may come, and that is all; there is no consciousness of his great inward need, no confession that we read of. Like the devils, he believes and trembles, but he does not turn to God on his own account. And so he passes out of the inspired history. There is a legendary one about him, which speaks of him as returning to his old arts as a magician, but with inveterate hatred of that from which he has turned; but there is no certainty about anything beyond what is written here.

The apostles help on the work in Samaria with their own testimony, and themselves evangelize many other villages; but there is no record given as to the success of their labors. The work is confirmed by their visit to Samaria, and fellowship established between this and what has been the headquarters of the Jewish work. A great step forward has plainly been accomplished.

Subd. 2.

We are carried off to other scenes, in company with the fruitful preacher at Samaria; who is taken from the work in which he has been blessed and honored, upon a journey which would seem naturally a strange one, announced to him as it is beforehand as to an indefinite place upon a desert road,—the road to a Philistine city. But God claims obedience as a first requisite for blessing; which surely follows it: the labor of believing simplicity shall not go unblessed. In fact he is to be now the evangelist of far-off lands.

A man of Ethiopia has been to Jerusalem to worship, and is returning by that desert road. We may be confident that Jerusalem had not much at that time to reward a pilgrimage. The road might well be to him a dreary one. With a heart for God, such as he surely had, the contact with priests and rulers of the stamp of Caiaphas and his Sadducean company must have thrown a shadow upon his soul. He was besides an outcast religiously, spite of a high position

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. viii. 26–40.)

The Word still going further, and the Old Testament conducting to the New.

BUT an [b]angel of [the] Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go southward, upon the way which goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is [c]desert. And he arose, and went. And behold, a man of [d]Ethiopia, a eunuch, a man in power under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, had come to [e]worship at Jerusalem. And he was [f]returning, and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Esaias. And the [g]Spirit said unto Philip, Draw near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither, and heard him reading the prophet Esaias, and he said, [h]Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How should I be able, except some one should guide me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And the passage of the Scripture which he read

b cf. ch.5.19, 20.
cf. ch. 10.3.
cf. ch. 12.7.
*cf.*ch.27.23, 24.
c ctr. vers. 6-8.
*cf.*ch.16.23, 24.
*cf.*Rev.3.7.
d cf. Jer.38. 7, etc.
cf. Ps.68.31.
e cf. 1 Ki. 8. 41, 42.
*cf.*Jno.12.20.
f cf. Lk. 24. 13, etc.
cf. Is. 1.11-14.
g ch. 10. 19.
cf. ch. 13.2.
*cf.*ch.20.23.
h cf. Lk. 24. 45.
cf. 2 Cor. 3. 15.
*cf.*Rom.10. 14, 15.

and his heart for God. As a eunuch, (if we are to take that literally, as I doubt not,) he could not come into the congregation of the Lord (Deut. xxiii. 1); whatever precious assurances there might be for him of future blessing (Isa. lvi. 3–5). Sitting in his chariot, on his return from the city of hollow forms and barren solemnities, he turns naturally to the pages of the prophets, and of Isaiah most of all, to find consolation ; but here too he was met by sorrow, and of a kind also that he could not penetrate,—the sorrows of One from whom Israel, it seemed, had turned, of One led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb dumb before its shearers, His judgment taken away, His life from the earth. He is reading this aloud as he overtakes Philip upon the road, as if he would impress himself with something which should have significance for him, but has not ; the cloud is over it hopelessly, as it seems to him, without some guide ; and he has none. How could he think of finding an interpreter upon that desert way, his back upon Jerusalem, and after his useless visit there?

How the voice of the evangelist, cheery with its message ready, the Voice of the Spirit astir in him to deliver it, must have made his heart leap in response to the question which penetrated already with a ray of light the gloom of his perplexity, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How should I?" he answers simply ; "except some one should guide me?" And immediately there springs up in his soul the eager hope that in this unknown stranger, God may have sent him help. He asks Philip, therefore, to sit with him in his chariot, and soon is an enwrapt hearer of the gospel of Christ.

Philip's text has been already found for him : from the prophet's picture of the Servant of Jehovah he begins to preach Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prediction ; and the good seed sinks into soil prepared. The eunuch finds that he too can have his place in the congregation of the Lord ; and he finds One who can do for him what Jerusalem and the law have been unable to do. He takes his place without hesitation as owning in baptism Jesus as his Lord ; and, Philip being immediately caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, he goes upon his way with the living Saviour, who is to be henceforth his Guide and Friend, rejoicing.

This story closes here ; too soon to satisfy the interest that has been awakened in it. We would fain follow this simple-hearted traveler, and learn whether he is permitted to become the evangelist of the land to which he is returning,—whether, or in what measure, Ethiopia will now stretch out her hands towards God : but nothing of all this is made known to us. If we find in it a hint of the gospel now to go out to the nations afar off, yet it is but a hint, and not an

was this: 'He was led as a sheep to the [j]slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so he [k]openeth not his mouth. In his humiliation his [l]judgment was taken away; his generation who shall declare? for his [m]life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered and said to Philip, I pray thee, of [n]whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from [o]this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came upon a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?* And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water,—both Philip and the eunuch; and he [p]baptized him. And when they had come up out of the water, the [q]Spirit of [the] Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more; for he went on his way, [r]rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he [s]preached the glad tidings to all the cities, until he came to Cæsarea.

i *cf.* Is. 53.7, 8.
j ch. 2. 23.
k *cf.* 1 Pet.2. 23.
l *cf.* Phil.2.8. *cf.* Lk.23.41, 47.
m *cf.* Ps.102. 23, 24. *cf.* Dan. 9. 26.
n *cf.* ch.2.30, 31. *cf.* Rev. 19. 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.
o *cf.* Lk. 24. 27. *cf.* ch.17.2,3, *cf.* ch.10.43.
p ch. 16. 33, etc.
q *cf.* 1 Ki.18. 12. *cf.* 2.Ki.2.16. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 12, 14.
r ver. 8.
s *cf.* ver. 25. *cf.* ch. 21.8.

* The thirty-seventh verse of the common version is omitted in nearly all the earliest MSS. and versions.

assurance. The apostle of the Gentiles is not yet raised up, and it is his work that we are to pursue in this connection, though there are preliminaries, as we are now to see. But if this be the purport of the story here, it does not seem completed as we might expect. There must be, one would say, another purpose in it; and we are naturally led to look at it again, to see if we may not discover this.

And here at once it strikes us, that this is a child of the old dispensation, in whom its necessary limitations and failure to satisfy those to whom it ministered are plainly set forth, and to whom it is but a hand pointing forward to Him who alone can do this. It is, in short the Old Testament leading on its disciples to the New, that we have before us here; an important point in the history of these times we are considering. We have but just now seen in Samaria how the New Testament takes care to vindicate the Old. Now we have the converse of this; it is the Old Testament seen awakening the longings of the heart after that which it cannot itself supply, while it does testify to the Living Source of it. With this meaning all the details of the story agree: the appearance of the angel of the Lord—that is, of Jehovah*—to Philip, to make known to him his commission. When his work is accomplished, again, it is "the Spirit of Jehovah" who snatches away the messenger. This is both Old Testament speech and action. The Spirit of Jehovah occurs once in the Gospels (Luk. iv. 18), and once before in the Acts (chap. v. 9); it never occurs in the New Testament again. Jehovah also, or what stands for it here, the Name for Israel's covenant God, is naturally found also in Old Testament connection, or in that part of the New in which it is not yet decided whether Israel is or is not to be the special people of God. The Gospels have it frequently, and the first eight chapters of the Acts; after this, except for special reasons in the twelfth chapter, it occurs but twice, or possibly thrice (chap. xiii. 10, 11; xv. 17). The Old Testament has in fact handed over its disciples to the New; and in the

*In the Septuagint, as in our common version of the Old Testament, from which (with the apparent vindication of it in the New) the practice is derived, "the Lord" is commonly substituted for the "Jehovah" of the Hebrew. It is distinguished in the New from the general reference to the Lord Jesus (except where it is a direct quotation from the Greek version) by the omission of the article, bracketed in our text,—"[the] Lord."

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. ix. 1–30.)
The Gospel of the Glory of Christ.

1(1-9): Grace to the chief of sinners.

1. BUT Saul, [t]still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him [u]letters to Damascus, unto the synagogues, that if he found any who were of the [v]Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he

[t] ch. 8. 1, 3. ch.26.10,11.
[u] ch. 22. 5.
[v] ch.19.9,23. ch.24.14,22

Epistles we find it only in such references as before mentioned, or two or three times in those written to believers of the circumcision, as in James and Peter. A very few times (again most naturally) it occurs in Revelation. The significance here is therefore plain.

The eunuch is a man in high position, a man of wealth, and of an earnest heart. He is therefore one in whom the character of the Old Testament can be most conspicuously seen; while we see also the care of God for His own to relieve the darkness for those who in their perplexity sought to Him. The Psalms illustrate abundantly both the darkness and the relief. Now the dawn of a brighter day had begun; and the Old Testament hails with gladness its coming so long delayed. It was yet but the dawn, though how bright a one!

Philip is caught away; the mere human teacher is not to take the place of the Divine. His coming and his departure are both well fitted to assure the new disciple how safely he may rest in the all-sufficiency that has thus met and ministered to him. Philip on his part is found at Azotus, the Philistine Ashdod; and from thence, with the joy in his heart of one who is taking the spoil* from the strong one whom a Stronger has overcome, he evangelizes all the cities as far as Cæsarea.

SUBD. 3.

In perfect order of development, we are now to see the conversion of the apostle of the Gentiles; who receives grace and apostleship from the ascended Lord. We have noticed already the connection between Stephen's witness and that of Paul. In Stephen Israel has definitely rejected the Messiah, and thus put from her the blessing to be brought in by Him; the blessing for the earth at large being identified with that of the earthly people. But God has other and higher purposes,—the display of a fuller grace which shall both stoop lower and lift up higher. Man having been thoroughly shown out, not merely impotent and rebellious under law, but in the cross of Christ the mind of the flesh being manifested as enmity against God, He will now act for Himself, to display Himself; and since He is Love, it must be in love that He is displayed,—love in answer to enmity; which is, therefore, grace: of which the messenger is in himself also the perfect exponent. Saul has shared in the national sin of Christ's rejection, is of the party that could be quoted as to an individual in opposition to Him (Jno. vii. 48), was in agreement with the murder of Stephen, and is only roused by it to greater violence; he is the apostle of Jewish malignity, pursuing the disciples even to strange cities, at the very time when he is smitten down by the light from an open heaven, and transformed from the persecutor of Christ into His most devoted follower,—ever afterwards the apostle of the grace that has transformed him. Here, where there could be no possible thought of claim, heaven, closed to man's righteousness, opens to its central, infinite glory, to display in the midst of it, whence the light came, the One whom as yet Saul knew not, but who identified Himself with His suffering saints on earth. The gospel of the glory of Christ was henceforth his gospel.

It is evident that here the meaning of Stephen's radiant face is now made plain. Heaven is really opened,—a Man gone in there, but occupying a place that no mere man could occupy. Paul preaches Him from the first, that He is the

*Ashdod means "spoiler."

journeyed, it came to pass that he drew [w]near unto Damascus; and suddenly there flashed around him a [z]light out of heaven. And he [y]fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why [z]persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he [said], I am [a]Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be [b]told thee what thou must do. And the men who journeyed

*That which follows here in the common version is found in no Greek MS.

z cf. Zech. 2. 8; *cf.* Jno. 15. 20, 21; *cf.* Eph. 5. 29, 30. *a cf.* ch. 2. 33-36; *cf.* Heb. 2.9. *b cf.* ch. 16. 30, 31; *cf.* Gal. 1. 12-16.

w cf. ch. 22. 6-17. *cf.* ch.26.10 -18. *cf.*1 Cor.15. 9, 10 with Zech. 3. 2. *x cf.*1 Jno.1. 5. *cf.*2 Cor. 4. 6. *y cf.* Job 42. 5, 6. *cf.* Phil.3.7, 8. *cf.*Lk.18.13.

Son of God (ver. 20). Yet he sees Him none the less the Representative of His people, and the bringing men to see and fill their place in Him is henceforth to be his effort,—that for which the Spirit of God has taken him up and uses him. We may not find it come fully out in the Acts, but the necessary first consequence is that Jew and Gentile have no more any separate standing. It is not a Christ after the flesh that he sees, but a Christ in heaven ; and that is not the place of a Jew's blessings, nor one from which, if grace bestow it, he can exclude the Gentile. The apostle of the Gentiles is here prepared.

1. Grace is the foundation of all,—free, sovereign grace. Of what use his privileges as a Jew to one taken red-handed on his mission of blood, as Saul is now ! It is not a mere repentant sinner suing for and finding mercy. He is an enemy, when as such he is reconciled to God. Legality is an impossibility to one in his position. He cannot dream of any of those half-gospels with which men delude themselves first, and then their hearers. He, at least, had not done his best, save to be lost. His Pharisaism tumbled in one rag-heap at his feet, his cry was now that he was "chief of sinners ;" and under no legal system whatever could the *chief* of sinners possibly have hope. But he, met and conquered by divine love, was given no room to dishonor it by a single question. And "in me," he says, "did Christ Jesus show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on Him, to life everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 16). Thus was Paul's doctrine prepared for him at the start ; and he also, even in his unconverted state, for it.

"Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church," was Paul's own account afterwards of the state in which divine grace found him (Phil. iii. 6). It did not alter his conviction that he was the chief of sinners ; "the least of the apostles," he says elsewhere, and "not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God " (1 Cor. xv. 9). A man's religion may be the worst thing about him ; and his sincerity in it will not hinder its effect upon him, but rather make it the more sure. In this case, how solemn to realize that Saul's religion was zealous law-keeping ; the law being that which God Himself had given : it was one of Moses' disciples, of whom they could rightly say, "We know that God spake by Moses," who was in that character attacking Christ !

"Touching the righteousness of the law, blameless ;" this is another thing that, looking back at himself with full Christian enlightenment, he says of his unconverted state. That was what his conscience said : it did not condemn or accuse him ; and that was undoubtedly what in his case made him the zealous persecutor that he was : he had a zeal for God and for that law under which he had fared so well, and deserved so well of Him who gave it ! Thus all that seemed so favorable in Saul's case was what was most against him : his own good character, his zeal for law, and, as he allows with regard to his nation at large, his zeal for God even (chap. xxii. 3) ; and that God was the true God, not a false one : whom yet he was bitterly against, and knew it not, and who was therefore, in so far, against him, even while He pursued in His love this zealous antagonist. What confusion is here! And this is the confusion which

with him stood speechless, [c]hearing the voice,* but beholding no one. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he [d]saw no one;† and they led him by the hand, and brought him to Damascus. And he was [e]three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

c *cf.* Dan. 10. 7. *cf.* Jno. 12. 28, 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
d ch. 22. 11. *ctr.* ch. 9. 40.
e *cf.* Lk. 24. 7 with Col. 2. 12.

*The "voice," but not the words, (as shown by the genitive here) in contrast with xxii. 9, which implies the words.
†Many read, "nothing."

springs out of all self-justifying efforts: "for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3). Paul will tell us himself in his first epistle, how the scales fell from his eyes in this respect. At present it is with the consequences that God faces him; and on the road to Damascus he suddenly finds himself smitten down by the light of a glory shining in the face of Him against whom the full current of his legal prejudices, with his traditionalism and his strong passion for his nation, all combined to carry him.

It is striking that, while we know from Paul's own statements afterwards, and even from the words of Ananias to him in the present chapter, that Jesus Himself appeared to him, we hear in this first account only of the Light and of the Voice; light out of heaven, in which, certainly for the first time, he stood revealed to himself; a Voice along with it, which fastened his eyes upon himself, even then to raise with himself the question, rather than to accuse, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

There could, of course, be no answer. Under the power of that glory which had transfigured Stephen, the very throb of the heart must have been hushed, called to expectant stillness in the presence of God. No need for answer! Had he not helped to batter out that glory from a human face with stones? Now a Human Voice from the midst of that glory was appealing to him, claiming these persecuted ones as His own—Himself! Yet he is drawn,—not repelled. Even now he can seek from Him who is speaking the anticipated answer which condemns—but HE has *not* condemned—him: "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Royal Voice answers, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

Thus they come together—Lord and follower; never to be separated more! How grand and wonderful is the simplicity of it all! The chief of sinners and the Lord of saints come together in a manner which has cost how great a price to effect; and the grace shown is as implicit as it wakes up implicit confidence to receive it. Has not this smitten sinner been in the outshining glory of God, unsmitten?—in the radiance shining on Stephen himself? There are other accounts, but they do not alter this; one can only say, the grace of it is perfect: and when we learn that he is to be the teacher of grace to others, we realize how completely fitted for such a purpose is that of which the history is recorded here. But it is the same grace which meets all of us.

We can see too, that the identification of Christ with His people is here, which is to be developed on two sides, as "ye in Me and I in you." And in this Jew and Gentile disappear, and the way for the mystery of the Church is prepared. Heaven is opened: God has come out to men; and Man—how glorious a MAN!—has gone in to God. Who that knows what was committed to Paul to teach us, but must see how the Pauline truths begin to appear in Paul's conversion? We must not expect to reach their development in the Acts; and it is not yet, therefore, the time to follow their development. We must wait for Romans, Ephesians, Corinthians, Hebrews, to have the working out.

The words that follow, in the common version, this declaration of Himself upon the Lord's part are borrowed from the other accounts of what is here. Luke gives us in this place only the direction to the new disciple to enter into the

2 (10-16): The mission of Ananias.

2. Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus, by name Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a [f] vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, [here am] I, Lord. And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight; and seek in the house of Judas one by name Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he [g] prayeth, and hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have [h] heard from many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy Name. But the Lord said unto him, Go; for he is a [i] chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name both before the [j] nations and [k] kings, and the [l] sons of Israel; for I will show him how many things he must [m] suffer for my Name.

f cf. ch. 10.3, 17.
cf. ch. 2. 17.
g cf. Lk. 18. 13.
cf. Lk. 15.7.
h vers 1, 2.
cf. Gal. 1.23.
i cf. Gal. 1. 15, 16.
cf. Rom. 1.1.
j cf. Rom. 11. 13.
cf. Eph. 3. 7, 8.
k cf. 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17.
cf. ch. 26. 1, 2, etc.
l cf. ch 21.40.
cf. Rom. 1. 16.
cf. Rom. 9. 1–5.
m ch. 20. 23.
cf. 2 Cor. 11. 23–28.
cf. Gal. 6.17.

city, and there it shall be told him what he is to do. The men accompanying him stand speechless, hearing the sound of the voice, but nothing more; the significance is for Paul. He on the other hand remains blinded by the light, and has to be led by the hand into Damascus; in which condition he continues three days without food or drink. He needs this, doubtless, for the tempest aroused within him to subside,—for the review of the now terrible past, and the realization of the new beginning. The resurrection number may well have its significance here in the apprehension of the old things now for him passed away, and all things become new. Shut up in darkness, amid his now uncongenial associates, he is made to realize his entire dependence upon God to bring him forth, and to accomplish in him the purposes of His marvellous grace.

2. We have now a lovely picture of the free intimacy between our Lord and His disciples in those yet unclouded days of early freshness. Saul is to take his place among the followers of the Crucified in the lowly way of baptism at the hands of those who had preceded him as such. A disciple named Ananias ("Jah has shown grace") is chosen by the Lord for the introduction of Saul. He is simply termed a "disciple," and yet is chosen, not only for the administration of baptism, which is in keeping with all that we have elsewhere in relation to this, but also for that which at Samaria just now required a special visit of apostles from Jerusalem—the communication of the Spirit. We have not yet come to this, however, here; but simply to consider the choice of Ananias to minister in the way we see him do to one designed to be the special apostle of the Gentiles. In Paul we see, as he himself declares to us, any Jewish thought of succession from the original twelve broken through. Paul is an "apostle, not of men, nor through man;" and on this account confers not with flesh and blood, nor even goes up to Jerusalem in the first place, to those who were apostles before him, but to Arabia, to the "backside of the desert" (Gal. i. 16, 17). The living and abiding Spirit is to be Himself the Source of supply; and the warrant for what is said is, first of all, the truth of it, intertwining with, confirmed by and confirming, all that is truth elsewhere.

Ananias is therefore, as a simple disciple, all the more suited to be sent to Saul; and the Lord accordingly appears to him in a vision, bidding him go and seek in the house of Judas this man who has seen him in a vision, in answer to his prayer, laying his hands upon him, that he may receive his sight. Thus he who is to be in such a large and blessed way, the minister to others is to learn himself, first of all, his own need of ministry, and to receive it. How suited a messenger must this Ananias, with his significant name have seemed to the thankful and humbled man! "Grace" was, indeed, his new-

3 (17-22): Filled with the Spirit.

3. And Ananias went away and entered into the house; and, [n] laying his hands on him, he said, Saul, Brother, the Lord hath sent me,—Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way by which thou camest,—that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be [o] filled with [the] Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight. And he arose, and was [p] baptized; and having taken food, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were in Damascus certain days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the [q] Son of God. And all who heard him were astonished, and said, [r] Is not this he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called upon this name, and came hither for this purpose, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul [s] increased more and more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that [t] this is the Christ.

n ver. 12. *cf.* Mk. 16. 18.
ctr. ch. 8. 17-20.
o cf. ch. 10. 44.
p cf. ch. 16. 33, 34.
q cf. Rom. 1. 4. *cf.* Jno. 9. 35.
cf. Heb. 4. 14.
r vers. 13, 14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-17.
s cf. 1 Tim. 4. 14, 15.
t cf. ch. 17. 3. *cf.* ver. 20.

found joy. But Saul's reputation has gone before him, and Ananias shrinks from his task, and ventures even to remonstrate with his Lord. Do we, who perhaps wonder at his foolish faint-heartedness, never imitate it, and reason with Omniscient Love as to His ways with us? But the Lord replies by letting him know that Saul was a chosen vessel unto Him, to bear His Name in testimony of the widest range,—to Gentiles and to Jews both; but the Gentiles here come before the Jews. That which he is to suffer also is proportioned to the breadth of his testimony; to bear the Name of Jesus implies suffering; witness and martyr are to be the same word.

3. There can be no more demur, but Ananias departs upon his errand; and entering the house, lays his hands upon Saul, acquainting him with his commission. It is remarkable that Ananias here joins his being filled with the Spirit as that for which he is sent, while yet it is not mentioned when, or in connection with what, Saul receives the Spirit. With Jews, as having openly rejected Christ, the order elsewhere was that they owned him in baptism, by which they received public remission of their sins, and then they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost nothing is said of the laying on of hands for this, which is first recorded as done in Samaria; but at Ephesus also John's disciples are first baptized, and then they still wait for the Spirit until Paul's hands are laid upon them. In the case of Cornelius and his friends, there is no previous baptism, and no laying on of hands at all. *Was* there any laying on of hands for this by Ananias? Two things would argue for it,—the words of Ananias himself, and the case of John's disciples. On the other hand, on the imposition of hands all we hear of as following is the healing of Saul's blindness; there is nothing said of the Spirit being given at that time; nor of any imposition of hands at a later time. The insistence upon baptism first in the case of the Jew seems likewise against it; though the apostle of the Gentiles is so exceptional a case, and seems so to reflect the gospel that he carries, and the change in regard to the Gentile is so marked, that one is inclined to read his saying. "Christ sent me not to baptize," *back* into his own history here. In this unsatisfactory way, it seems, we have to leave it.

"Filled with the Holy Spirit," however, he is indeed; immediately preaching in the synagogues to which his letters of authorization are addressed that very Jesus, whose followers he is commissioned to destroy. He preaches Him also as yet the twelve, as far as the history goes, have not done, in the very character in which Israel had rejected Him, as *Son of God*. This is the fullest reversal of his own mad unbelief, and the completest challenge of that of Israel.

¶ (23-30): Tribulation.

4. Now, when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took [u] counsel together to slay him; but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched also the gates day and night, that they might slay him; but the* disciples took him by night, and [v] let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket. And when he was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples; and they were all [w] afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple. But [x] Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had spoken boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them [y] going in and out at Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spake and disputed with the Grecian Jews; but they went to work to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to [z] Cæsarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

[u] ch. 5. 21. cf. ch. 7. 57, 58.
[v] 2 Cor. 11. 32, 33. cf. Josh. 2. 15. cf. 1 Sa. 19. 12.
[w] cf. vers. 13, 14.
[x] ch. 4. 36. cf. ch 11. 22–26.
[y] cf. ch. 22. 17, 18.
[z] ctr. ch. 23. 31–35.

* R. V. reads, "his," but this is not required by the text, and does violence to the teaching of scripture.

The missionary of their own enmity is suddenly become the very champion of the "Way" he persecuted. Astonishment, which for the moment must have been dismay, falls upon those who hear him and know that which has wrought this change, to which his companions on the road could but bear witness as far as that strange interruption of their journey was realized by them. And Saul increased more and more in strength, and confounded the Jews dwelling at Damascus, proving that the One whom he confessed was indeed the Christ.

The preaching of Jesus as the Son of God we should naturally have expected to have heard in the first place from the lips of John, whose writings are, as we know, so full of this. In Paul's epistles, if Hebrews is, as I doubt not, to be included among these, we have the Lord spoken of in this character twenty-nine times; but in John's epistles (of only seven chapters) there are twenty-three occurrences. In one passage alone in the rest of the General Epistles, where Peter quotes the Voice from the "excellent glory" (2 Pet. i. 17), do we find this title; this, although Peter is in the Gospels the first of the inspired writers to own Christ openly in this way. The kinship between Paul and John is thus plainly declared. The connection with Paul's doctrines we must consider later, as we take up his epistles.

4. The visit to Arabia, of which the epistle to the Galatians speaks, takes place evidently during those "many days" at the end of which the persecution breaks out, in which first Saul has to taste of the same cup of which he had been compelling others to drink in the dark days forever ended. At first the wonder of his conversion had discomfited the adversaries; but this naturally terminates in a violent reaction on the part of those who have not been brought by it to God; and now they join together in a plot to slay him: but He who in so extraordinary a way had brought him to Himself had no intention of leaving him in the hands of his enemies. The plot became known to Saul; and the gates being watched day and night, the disciples let him down in a basket through a window in the wall by night, and he escapes their hands.

So ends Saul's testimony at Damascus; nor is he rescued by a miracle from the death designed for him, but escapes in a lowly manner enough, more suited to the way of the Cross which he had begun to tread. It is but the beginning of those many sufferings which the Lord had said that He would show him that he was to endure for His sake. The Glory which was henceforth his guiding star did not light up the earth for him, but drew him out of it. His was to be in a

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. ix. 31–43.)

Remnant mercy in Israel.

1 (31): Peace.

1. THEN had the assembly* [a]peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, being [b]edified; and, walking in the [c]fear of the Lord, and in the [d]comfort of the Holy Spirit, was [e]multiplied.

*So the earliest MSS. and versions; but many read, "assemblies."

[a] *ctr.* ch. 8. 1.
[b] *cf.* Eph. 4. 16.
[c] *cf.* Heb. 12. 28. *cf.* Ps. 34. 9.
[d] *cf.* Phil. 2. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 14. 16.
[e] *cf.* ver. 42. *cf.* ch. 16. 5.

peculiar sense a heavenly testimony, and the power of it that by which the world was crucified to him, and he unto the world.

Driven from Damascus, Saul goes up to Jerusalem, according to his own statement to see Peter (Gal. i. 18); for what purpose we are not told; but he abode there only fifteen days. Although three years had elapsed from the time of his conversion, the report of it which had reached the disciples there had yet found no credit in the scene of his former "ravages" upon the flock of Christ. In Arabia he had been for some time probably away from observation, and his recent testimony again in Damascus seems not to have been known. Thus when he essayed to join himself to those whom he had helped to scatter, and who had, no doubt, many of them, vivid remembrances of those unhappy days, there was a general recoil. "They were all afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple." At this juncture the future companion of his labors, Barnabas, appears as mediator. He took and brought him to the apostles; that is, as Paul himself tells us, to Peter and James, the Lord's brother, and represents to them the whole matter. The cloud is cleared away, and Saul remains with them going in and out at Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

He takes up now the work of the first martyr, disputing with the Hellenistic Jews, who go to work to give him Stephen's portion; but in an ecstasy (chap. xxii. 17, 18) the Lord appears to him, and bids him depart from the city, assuring him that they will not hear his testimony, and that he is to be sent far off to the Gentiles. The brethren thereupon bring him down to Cæsarea on the sea-coast, and send him forth to Tarsus, his native city. There for awhile we leave him.

SUBD. 4.

Israel is thus casting out the messengers sent to her, and filling full for herself the cup of wrath, which at a later time we know that she drank to the uttermost. But God is slow to anger, and of great mercy; and while the threatened judgment lingers, His long suffering is salvation to a remnant, in whom may be seen the promise yet abiding of final blessing to Israel as a whole. This remnant is as the sap of a cut down tree, in which is the hope of revival for the tree. The history of the development of the divine ways in the Church pauses for awhile here, to give us such an intimation of the faithfulness of a Saviour God.

1. We have first, as the result of the dealing of God with the chief persecutor, peace to the assembly throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria;—the whole extent, as far as yet enjoyed, of Israel's land. It is but a remnant, this assembly, as already said, and the mass are rejecting; and so it will be even in the last days: a remnant will become the nation; God having to purge out the obstinate rejectors from among the people, as prophecy shows abundantly. Here it is only a hint of what will be; yet we see in it Judea and Jerusalem maintained in their central place, Samaria owning it, in Galilee of the Gentiles God's heart towards His scattered ones. Outwardly there is peace; inwardly the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. How blessed to realize when for Israel at last all this shall be fulfilled!

Let us notice what are here put together for us: first of all, not the comfort, but the fear of the Lord,—hearts in subjection to the Ruler of His people. With Him, if grace reigns, as it does, the reign is not less absolute, but more.

2 (32-35): Æneas healed.

2. And it came to pass, as Peter went [f] throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years, [and] * was [g] paralysed. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus the Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately; and [h] all that dwelt in Lydda and the Sharon saw him, and † turned to the Lord.

[f] *cf.* ch. 8.25.

[g] *cf.* Matt. 9. 2, etc. *cf.* Mi. 4. 6, 7.

[h] *cf.* Ps. 126. 1, 2.

3 (36-43): Dorcas raised up.

3. Now there was in Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which being interpreted is called Dorcas; ‡

* Literally, "who." † οἵτινες: "who also." ‡ "Gazelle."

When grace has not for its effect the fear of the Lord, in the same proportion is grace really unknown, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit will be unenjoyed. The Spirit is here to glorify Christ; and, as the *Holy* Spirit, refuses absolutely all touch of evil; legality and license are both in uttermost extreme from Him, and further by far than they are from one another. The slave may at times make up for his slavery by license; the child's happy service needs no compensation for its offering of love.

Here in a soil like this the seed of divine truth will fructify; for it is love that edifieth; and the assembly walking in such a spirit will be surely multiplied. Where an opposite spirit exists, multiplication will be but a multiplication of the evil; it is a good law that forbids such unhappy growths to go on, whose sap, against nature, is poisonous to themselves.

2. We now follow Peter, who with the growth of the work is no more confined to Jerusalem, but is passing through the land. He comes down to the saints who dwell at Lydda, a still existing town in the plain of Sharon, and finds there a certain man, who from the description and the apostle's words to him seems not yet to be a disciple, named Æneas, eight years paralyzed. Immediately, upon Peter's declaration, "Jesus the Christ healeth thee, arise, and make thy bed," he is healed and rises up; and all that dwelt in Lydda and the Sharon" (the Plain, stretching from Joppa to Cæsarea on the sea-coast), "saw him, and turned to the Lord."

Conversion so widespread shows indeed that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew (Rom. xi. 1); and Lydda well fulfills its name, as the "birthplace" of so many souls. We naturally ask ourselves, Is this all that we are intended to find in it? or is there here, as in so many other cases, a hidden meaning? If the Lord is assuring us in this of what the apostle declares that Israel's remnant according to election preaches to us, would it be strange to find in it a further assurance as to God's purposes towards His ancient people? Here too, would be the very place in which we might expect to find this: here, where we are just at the point at which, the natural branches being broken off for unbelief, the Gentiles are being graffed into the olive. Certainly all is in harmony in this way. Æneas means "praise"; and in the case of Israel, a paralysis of praise is truly come upon her. She is a reproach instead of praise, but is yet to be a people formed for Himself, to show forth His praise. Æneas is thus yet to be healed, and as it were in a moment, by Jesus the Christ; and Lydda may well speak of a new "birth" by which this will be effected. Nothing else will accomplish it; for the nature of man is fallen, and the Lydda of natural birth is in the "plain,"—the common level of humanity. Christ alone can renew it; so that in the end Sharon shall be a fold of flocks (Isa. lxv. 10), a type of which this remarkable ingathering of converts there may speak. For when Israel is that praise to God which she never yet has been, then will the time have come for such a turning to God as the earth has not yet witnessed. Israel's eighth year will have come,—her new covenant time.

3. If this, then, be the deeper view of the healing of Æneas, the raising up of Dorcas must, one would say, be in the same line of application, and have its

she was [i]full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she fell sick and [j]died; whom having washed, they laid in an [k]upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating him, Delay not to come on to us. And Peter arose and went with them; whom, when he had arrived, they brought up to the upper chamber. And all the [l]widows stood by him, weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, when she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her [m]alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa, with one [n]Simon, a tanner.

i cf. 1 Tim. 2. 10.
j cf. Jno. 11. 3, 14. *cf.* Ru. 1. 3, 5.
k cf. ch. 1. 13. *cf.* ch. 20. 8.
l ctr. ch. 6. 1.
m cf. Lk. 8. 51–55. *cf.* Rom. 11. 15.
n cf. ch. 10. 6, 28.

own story to tell, different, yet connected. And here one thing is plain: Æneas presents to us the healing of a sinner; Dorcas, on the other hand, the resurrection of a saint. If both of these speak of Israel, it must be in these contrasted ways: and in both ways it is clear that Israel may be spoken of, or her history would be a very different one from what we know it to be. Israel as astray from God is how the centuries long have known her, the enemy of Christ and of His cause, and for many this has almost blotted out the remembrance of the long debt we owe her, and of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles that have sprung from her. But God does not forget: "I remember thee," He says, "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord" (Jer. ii. 2, 3). And for us, how is it possible to forget that from Israel we have obtained, through the mercy of God, almost the whole of the precious volume of inspiration, out of which we have, so to speak, been fed and clothed, *not* for centuries merely, but for the life that is to come? Here as a picture of Israel, this woman full of good works and almsdeeds is surely no unfitting one. The more we consider, the more we shall realize its perfect appropriateness.

It is in Joppa, anciently Japho, that we find her.—a name which means, as I take it, "fair to Him." (See notes on Josh. xix. 46.) This agrees entirely with that view of Israel which is presented to us here. Tabitha's name is given us in two languages, as if there were importance in it, and means "beauty," in Daniel (chap. xi. 16, 41), twice applied to the land of Israel, "the *glorious* land." Its secondary meaning, in which we are to take it here, is "gazelle," so named from its beauty, one of the clean animals of Scripture, both chewing the cud and dividing the hoof (Lev. xi. see the notes). If we realize the typical meaning of these, we shall understand its application to one who "ruminates" upon the Word, the walk corresponding to this. Israel as represented by the psalmists, and especially the writer of the 119th psalm, answers fully to the name; and in this character they were suited to be vessels of inspiration, as in fact they were. The double name gets in this way its significance; for these two languages, Hebrew and Greek, were those of the Old and New Testaments, for both of which we are indebted to the Jew.

Tabitha is dead, and there is no human hope of recovery for her. We may weep and lament, but she is gone from us; yet those possessed with the spirit

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. x., xi.)

The Gentile brought to God.

1 (x.-xi. 18): Jew and Gentile at one.
1 (x. 1-20): God Himself the Mover.

1. [1] NOW [there was] a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a [o] centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that [p] feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God continually. He saw in a [q] vision, openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being afraid, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a [r] memorial before God. And now [s] send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the

o *cf.* Lk. 7. 2-10.
p ver. 35. *cf.* ch. 16. 14.
q *cf.* ch. 9. 10. *cf.* vers. 10-17.
r *cf.* Matt. 26. 13. *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, 10.
s ch. 11. 13, 14.

of Peter may still pray, not without hope, for Israel's resurrection. It will surely come, as it did in the case before us here, and Israel live in far more than all the glory of her past. The effect too, as in the healing of Æneas, will be the bringing many more to faith. Joppa or Japho will again fulfill its name, and "the Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people" (Isa. xxviii. 5).

How fitting and comforting an assurance with which to turn to see the incoming of the Gentile, as we find it now in the pouring out of the Spirit on Cornelius and his company at Cæsarea!

SUBD. 5.

The quiet and gradual way in which preparation has been made for the disappearance of the barrier between Jew and Gentile must be apparent to all. Israel has had full and patient trial, all possible proof given her of its being God who was appealing to her, God whom she was resisting, fully displayed in goodness ready to forget all past offences,—the very death of His Son, if only now at last, they would turn to Him. When it is manifest that they will not, then the door is opened to Samaria, a circumcised people, not without Jewish admixture, partially obedient to the law, and who are compelled to own Jerusalem in the reception of the distinct characteristic of the new faith that has gladdened them. Then God Himself leads on in a special way to the reception of the eunuch, with whom the grace of Christ goes out to lands afar off. After this it is that the apostle of the Gentiles is raised up, although only very slowly does his mission become known; he himself only slowly awaking to it; himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," yearning over his kinsmen after the flesh, and but now a rigid Pharisee. But even so, *he* is not to lead in the admission of the Gentiles; but an unexceptionable instrument is provided for this,—no less than the foremost of the apostles of the circumcision, Peter himself.

In this also now God manifests His will with unmistakable plainness in the double vision, at Joppa and Cæsarea; then by the outpouring of the Spirit in view of all who came with Peter: those who are ready to oppose at Jerusalem have to own that God has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life.

After this the way is opened by which certain disciples without any prominence of gift or position can speak at Antioch to the Gentiles, and gather an assembly there; and this becomes a new point of departure from which the first direct mission to the Gentiles is sent out; but this by a special revelation of the Spirit, which sets apart Barnabas and Saul for the new work.

1. The first section here manifestly takes in the work at Cæsarea, by which the principles are established which henceforth govern the Assembly. It is in effect constituted by them as now outside the Jewish fold. The exodus is really

sea.* And when the angel who was speaking to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, of those who waited upon him continually, and having related all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

And on the morrow, as †these were journeying, and drawing near to the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry, and desired to eat. But while they

† *cf.* ch. 8.26–39.

* The words following in the common version are wanting in all the best MSS.

complete, though there may be an effort afterwards really to undo this, and bring all the disciples under the law of Moses. This is resisted, however, on the very ground of what has been established here.

[1] All through this fresh movement, as already said, God is Himself the Mover. He begins, with the care which we see manifested all through, with an unexceptionably good example of the Gentile, a man "borne witness to by the whole nation of the Jews," and therefore, not perplexing the matter by any extraneous question. He is moreover a devout man, a worshiper of the true God, and one that truly fears Him, all his house participating with him also in this. Although not outwardly united in any way to Israel, yet his heart necessarily united him to the people of Him he worshiped, and he manifested this by his almsgiving. He was a man of prayer; praying to God continually. But all this, true as it was, and the fruit of faith, (without which it would not have been true, nor could God, as He presently does, have owned it,) had not sufficed to set him where grace sets the believer now, in conscious salvation. God was now "preaching peace by Jesus Christ"; and to those far off, and to those that were nigh, He had to preach it (Eph. ii. 17).

At the ninth hour of the day, the Jewish third hour of prayer, God owns and answers the man that seeks Him, and an angel of God visits him. The fear that falls on men so naturally in the presence of the supernatural, falls upon him, but the message is one of grace alone, and he is assured that his prayers and alms have come up for a memorial before God. He is directed therefore to send for Peter from Joppa, who shall tell him words (it is added in the account afterwards given at Jerusalem), whereby he and all his house shall be saved.

In such a declaration, if we are to understand it aright, we must remember that we are here in the overlapping of two dispensations. It is as evident, on the one hand, that Cornelius was already a believer, as that, on the other, he had not yet the faith of Christ. In the midst of Christendom to-day, such a condition would be perfectly anomalous and unintelligible; and so for most it would be to talk of a soul having life and being still unsaved. Cornelius undoubtedly had life; he was one of those sheep not of the Jewish fold, of which the Lord had spoken, whom He would bring and unite with those of Israel, and there should be one flock, one Shepherd (Jno. x. 16). He was in fact now causing these to hear His voice, and this accounts for what is strange apparently in the Gentile here, but which is at once intelligible when we consider his position between the dispensations. And though Cornelius was a believer of that which was passing away, yet for final salvation he needed to receive the Christ who had come, and would do so if the Shepherd's voice fairly reached him: for His sheep hear His voice. If it be final salvation that is spoken of here, all difficulty disappears as to the words used. Of a *present* salvation Judaism, as a legal system, could know nothing; much less, if possible, a Jewish proselyte, or one like the Roman centurion, converted to God, and yet outside the law. Into the precious assurance of this nothing but Christianity could bring him.

Let us notice, before we pass on, the blessed announcement, "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and *all thy house* shall be saved." They are in fact the

made ready, an ecstasy came upon him; and he beheld [u] heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, [tied]* at the four corners, [and]* let down to the earth; in which were [v] all the fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth, and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice unto him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything [w] common or unclean. And the

u *cf.* Eph. 3. 5, 6. *cf.* ch. 7. 56.
v *cf.* Rom. 3. 9 18.
w *cf.* Lev. 11. 1, etc. *cf.* Ezek. 4. 14. *cf.* Is. 66. 17.

* Omitted in some MSS.

paschal announcement of Christianity. Of the Jewish feasts, as we have them given in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, only those of the seventh month, in their typical significance, belong to Israel nationally,—the number seven being, as we know, the sign of completion—the complete time reached. Passover, the Sheaf of Firstfruits, Pentecost, were all offered to Israel, but rejected by them, and are become the peculiar Christian feasts, a silent gap of time intervening between these and the national seasons—the Blowing of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles—of the seventh month.

Passover is not *national*, in the sense in which the offerings of the Day of Atonement covered all Israel. It was kept by families, and might be held a second time by those who were hindered by defilement or a journey at the first celebration: just as now it is not nations that are contemplated, but believers from among the nations; however freely the gospel is addressed to all. Yet here nevertheless God would assure us of a grace that would not forget the links of relationship by which He has bound us together. "Thou and thy house" reminds us still of the family ordinance, though unbelief, in a dispensation whose principle is, "Thou standest by faith," may make all this void. For there is, of course, no possible reason for so wild an imagination as that the comforting promise to Cornelius' house, or any other, is "*irrespective of faith.*" Rather, if faith be in any sense the gift of God, are we assured by this, and the general thread of such intimations woven into Scripture, that He is ready to bless the households of His people still, wherever the Abrahamic faith shall be accompanied with that Abrahamic diligence of heart which seeks God's blessing in His appointed ways. However much the gospel might be preached to Cornelius' household, such an assurance would mean very much for him. We all have the comfort of knowing that it is the same gracious God with whom we have to do to-day, who has given us too, as some of us have the consolation of believing, in other ways, an assurance akin to that here vouchsafed the centurion; but which only faith can have and plead with Him aright. Here is not the place further to enlarge upon it.*

The angel does not preach the gospel to Cornelius, but sends Peter to him for this; so thoroughly does the Lord cleave to His own methods and appointments. Peter moreover, as we have seen, is specially needed here; and that need is seen the more in the means taken to prepare the apostle for what is before him. The Lord goes in advance of the messengers from Cæsarea to the house of Simon the tanner † by the seaside; and that house is the lowly birthplace of a wide and far-reaching movement in His ways with men.

* The name Cornelius is no doubt significant as all is here, though we may not see its significance. It was the name of a prominent Roman family—the Cornelian—and this, with his being the centurion of the Italian band, seems to emphasize the fact of his being absolutely a Gentile. The word Cornelius means, "pertaining to a horn." S. R.

† The occupation of tanner was considered unclean by the Jews. A large part of the tanning was the preparation of skins for water bottles. May there not be a suggestion here of the passing of that ceremonial uncleanness which is brought out in the history of Cornelius? Peter was already lodging at the house of this Simon, a preparer of unclean things to be vessels for holding pure water. That his house was by the seaside seems also to suggest the sea of the Gentiles,—a familiar thought in Scripture—upon whose border Peter indeed was. S. R.

voice [came] again to him the second time,* What God hath [x]cleansed, make not *thou* common. And this took place thrice, and the vessel was immediately [y]taken up into heaven.

Now as Peter doubted in himself what the vision he had seen might be, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, [z]stood at the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon who was surnamed Peter, was lodging there.

x *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9–11. *cf.* Eph. 2. 11, etc.

y *cf.* Eph. 5. 25–27. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 17.

z *cf.* ver. 9.

*Plural.

The vision sent to Peter is founded on that distinction of clean and unclean meats which operated so largely in keeping the Jew apart from the Gentile. The Gentile was himself in fact the unclean liver with whom the one who sought conformity to the mind of God could not indeed go far without danger of pollution. The law, entirely apart from the typical significance in which so much of the interest attaching to it is found by us to-day, served as a useful barrier to unlimited intercourse with the idolatrous world around, which in these very things had upon it, as we know, the stamp of its idolatry. The question of meats offered to idols could in this way become a serious one for Christians themselves, though now for the uninstructed only (1 Cor. viii). But Judaism as a rule for a people in the flesh, externally rather than spiritually set apart to God, was of necessity negative and prohibitory in its requirements,—a fold shutting in, rather than a principle of liberty: for liberty would be in their case concession, instead of victory over opposing forces. Christianity with its spiritual power alone could permit liberty. It was a sign of weakness for Judaism that it had no missions, preached no evangel: how could the word, "No man can see My Face and live," be this? So the Jew went beyond the law in his restrictions, built the fence higher and higher, but found none sufficient.

With Christianity a new power had come; Godward and manward there was a significant change. The Jew himself was gone morally: what use of a fence to keep from contamination the crucifiers of the Son of God? It was not merely that the mind of the flesh was not subject to the law of God; it was enmity to God Himself. And what the end of this long experiment proved as to the Jew, it proved really as to man at large; there was nowhere any betterness. Jew and Gentile had been united at the Cross; they had no need to separate after this: for the believer in Christ, the *world* was crucified by it, and he crucified to the world.

From that side the fence had gone; but from God's side it was gone also. For those who had crucified Christ, it must be now either judgment wholly, or else pure grace. But Christ need not have died to ensure man's condemnation; nor would He have died to increase man's doom. Thus, if there is to be any fruit of His death whatever, it must be grace. If God then means by it to show His grace, how great will that grace be!

In fact man by the murder of the Son of God has consummated his sin, and demonstrated his condition; but on the other hand Christ gave Himself for our sins, and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Thus the fence is down from God's side; the veil that hid His blessed face is rent from top to bottom, and to all men, guilty alike, and with no pretension to title, Jew or Gentile, God has come out, and whosoever will is welcome in.

In such light as this, then, the contention of Jew with Gentile is at an end; to maintain it is mere self-righteousness. The vessel that Peter sees comes down from heaven; and as seen thus the distinctions made by Judaism are ended and over. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "He" too "that believeth that Jesus is the

And while Peter pondered over the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee; but arise, and go down, and go with them, nothing [a]doubting; for *I* have sent them.

[a] *cf.* ch. 16. 9, 10.

2 (21-43): The testimony received.

[2] And Peter went down, and said unto the men, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; [b]what is the cause for which ye are come? And they said, [c]Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one fearing God, and borne witness to by the whole nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee. So he called them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the [d]brethren from Joppa went with him. And on the morrow he entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was [e]waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. And when Peter was now coming in, Cornelius met him, and [f]fell at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter raised him, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And talking with him, he went in, and found many come together: and he said to them, Ye [g]know how it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company or come unto one of a strange race; and to me hath God [h]shown that I must call no one common or unclean; wherefore also, when I was sent for, I came without gainsaying. I ask therefore, with [i]what intent ye sent for me. And Cornelius said, [j]Four days ago, I had been fasting* unto this hour; and* the ninth [hour] I was praying in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa, and fetch Simon, who

[b] ver. 29. *cf.* Lk. 18. 41.
[c] vers. 1-6.
[d] ver. 45. ch. 11. 12. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 1.
[e] *cf.* Lk. 8. 40. *cf.* Mk. 5. 19. *cf.* Jno. 4. 29.
[f] *cf.* ch. 16. 29. *cf.* Rev. 19. 10. *cf.* Rev. 22. 8, 9.
[g] ver. 14. ch. 11. 3. *ctr.* Gal. 2. 12, 13.
[h] ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 11. 15 18.
[i] ver. 21.
[j] vers. 1-8.

*Some of the oldest MSS. leave out "fasting," "and," but they are well supported, and seem necessary.

Son of God overcometh the world;" there is a new power, and with it a new liberty: the true Shepherd is calling His sheep out of the sheep-fold, and with Him, His hand over them, His voice in their ears, liberty is safe.*

The vessel comes down from heaven and returns again there: it is the Church, heavenly in origin, and heavenly in destination; and those within it are alike those whom God has cleansed, and who must not be called common.

But Peter still doubts the meaning of the vision, until the three men sent by Cornelius are at the door, inquiring after him, and the Spirit bids him rise and go with them, for He has sent them.

[2] Upon all this history the inspired writer dwells, not heeding repetition, for the heart of God is pouring itself out in this getting back to it now of those so long self-banished. The Gentile is truly the prodigal here restored; and we as Gentiles may well be touched at the interest displayed in those for whom the ring and robe are waiting. Things are told out at length, and we realize

*The unclean beasts and creeping things contained in the net were forbidden in Leviticus (chap. xi). The food of a clean people must be clean. But as man is assimilated to that upon which he feeds, we see here the character of all men—no doubt Jew as well as Gentile, though prominently the latter. The heavenly vessel is seen to be full of that which is represented by these unclean beasts and creeping things, the foul, vile, violent sinners—cleansed by grace and made meet for heaven. "And such were some of you." S. R.

is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea; who, when he is come, shall speak to thee.* Immediately therefore I sent unto thee; and thou hast done well, that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here [k]present before God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is [l]no respecter of persons: but in [m]every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. The word† which he sent unto the sons of Israel, preaching [n]peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) ye know;—the word‡ which came throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, [o]after the baptism that John preached: [even] Jesus who was of Nazareth, how God [p]anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about [q]doing

* A few of the oldest MSS. omit this clause.
† λογος ‡ ῥῆμα.

k cf. Lk. 8. 18. cf. Gal. 4. 14. cf. 1 Thess. 2. 13.
l cf. Rom. 2. 11. cf. Deut. 10. 17. cf. Rom. 3. 29, 30. cf. Rom. 10. 12, 13.
m cf. ch. 15. 7-11. cf. Rom. 2. 27-29.
n cf. Ps. 15. 1, 2. cf. Eph. 2. 17. cf. Lk. 2. 14. cf. Col. 1. 20.
o ch. 1. 22. cf. Matt. 4. 12 17.
p cf. Ps. 2. 2. cf. Matt. 3. 16, 17. cf. Ps. 45. 7.
q cf. Matt. 11. 2-6.

the response upon the other side, as we learn of the company which without prompting, save of a heart opening to the grace that greets him, Cornelius gathers to hear what, if he know not yet, he knows, so heralded, is good news from God. Upon all these, gathered up in the stretched out Arms, the Father's kiss is pressed in the Spirit presently outpoured,—the Spirit of adoption! What a scene to melt the last bit of legal ice out of the soul of Peter, as he realizes how impossible it is for him to withstand God! Truly it is impossible! the flood-gates are giving way, and all the fulness of divine love, long kept back by the requirements of divine righteousness, is hastening to manifest itself. The ages to come are to bear witness of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Nothing can keep back now what all the sin of man in its worst display has only shown in its supreme and glorious power.

Arrived at Cæsarea, Peter rebukes his would-be successors of to-day by raising up him who had fallen at his feet as the messenger of God; and having explained how God had delivered him from his Jewish prejudices, preaches Jesus as Christ and Lord to those assembled. He now fully realizes that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. How could *He* indeed ignore what is but the fruit of His own work in the soul, wherever found?

They were not unaware of the word which He had sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. As a word to Israel they had only as yet known of it; but He is Lord of all; and as that they were also now to have to say to Him. Of His mighty works they could not indeed be ignorant, who through all Judea and Galilee went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. How plain was it that in all this God was with Him! Yet what they had done to Him was as well known also; they had slain and hung Him on a tree! There for the nation He had disappeared: they indeed had seen Him no more; but God had raised Him up the third day, and manifested Him to chosen witnesses, who (as the one who stood before them now) had eaten and drunk with Him after He was risen from among the dead. From Him had these commission to proclaim Him to the people, and that as One divinely appointed to be Judge of the living and the dead.

There was a breach, then, as to the nation; Israel had rejected the Lord: God had answered it by setting Him high above all, and putting judgment into His hands; yet the testimony of it was already an intimation of grace. How far, and in what manner would that grace be shown? Here Peter brings in the wit-

good, and [r]healing all that were oppressed* of the devil; for [s]God was with him. And we are [t]witnesses of all things that he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom also they [u]slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God [v]raised up the third day, and gave him to be manifested, not to all the people, but to [w]witnesses chosen before of God,—to us who [x]ate and drank with him after he was risen from among the dead. And he [y]charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he who is appointed of God the [z]judge of the living and the dead. To him do all the [a]prophets witness, that through his Name every one who believeth on him shall receive [b]remission of sins.

3 (44-48): The Spirit poured out.

3 While Peter yet spake these things, the Holy Spirit [c]fell upon all who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were [d]astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that upon the nations also the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out. For they heard them [e]speak with tongues, and magnify God.

*Literally, "Held under the power."

4. 1. *a cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23; *cf.* Rom. 3. 21; *cf.* Lk. 24. 25-27. *b* ch. 5. 31; *cf.* ch. 13. 38, 39. *c* 2. 2; *ctr.* ch. 8. 15-17. *d cf.* ch. 11. 18; *cf.* ch. 15. 12. *e cf.* Mk. 16. 17; *cf.* ch. 19. 6.

r cf. Lk. 8. 27, etc. *cf.* Lk. 13. 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 8.
s cf. Jno. 3. 2. *cf.* Jno. 8. 29. *ctr.* Matt. 27. 46.
t ch. 1. 22. ver. 41.
u ch. 2. 23. ch. 13. 27, 28.
v ch. 2. 24.
w ch. 13. 30, 31. *cf.* ch. 1. 22. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 5-8.
x cf. Lk. 24. 30, 41-43. *cf.* Jno. 21. 9-13. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 1.
y cf. ch. 1. 2-8. *cf.* Jno. 20. 21.
z cf. Jno. 5. 21-29. *cf.* ch. 17. 31. *cf.* 2 Tim.

ness of the prophets, by whom from the beginning God had been speaking to men. It could not be, in fact, that such things should take place without having been anticipated and announced in the ages of which they were the consummation. That which affected the whole world could not be isolated from all its previous history. Central in their relation to all human things, the Cross and the Resurrection are in reality their explanation. With the testimony of the ages the glory of the miracle was only in harmonious correspondence. Its exceptionality was its fitness for the place it occupied.

They knew (the men whom the apostle was addressing) the testimony of the prophets, which, just as being Gentiles, would have for them an attraction of a special kind. Did it not speak of nations upon whom the Lord's name would be called? (Amos ix. 11, 12.) And in Abraham's Seed were not all the families of the earth to be blessed? But Peter more definitely interprets and applies the gospel of their predictions, that through the name of Jesus whosoever believed on Him would receive remission of sins. According to such a principle, the Gentile who believed had equal assurance of this with the Jew. If even to the Jew acceptance were by faith alone, then for the Gentile who had faith there was acceptance also.

3 Thus far had the apostle reached,—and he tells us himself, that it was but the beginning of what he intended to say (chap. xi. 15)—when he was arrested by a sign of precious significance: without the administration of baptism, as with the pentecostal audience,—without the imposition of apostles' hands, as at Samaria,—the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word! God again was the Mover; and in anticipation of every question that might be raised, setting aside all thought of human succession, or of sacramental endowment,—"by the hearing of faith" alone (Gal. iii. 2), the Gentiles received the Spirit, and were thus gathered into the assembly. The barrier between Jew and Gentile had been removed by the hand of God Himself, and the Church had assumed the character it was hereafter to retain. In Christ there was to be now neither Jew nor Gentile. The bond was not to be that of nationality nor of legal observance, but of the One Spirit uniting into one body. Not that the body of Christ was yet known doctrinally; nor even of the House of God have we yet heard, though the indwelling of the Spirit would give rise to a growing consciousness

Then answered Peter, Can any one forbid water, that these should not be [f]baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* Then prayed they him to [g]tarry certain days.

[4] (xi. 1-18): The place of the Gentile conceded.

[4] And the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the nations also had received the word of God. And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, they of the [h]circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter began, and set it forth in order unto them, saying, [i]I was in the city of Joppa, praying; and in an ecstasy I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending like a great sheet, let down by four corners out of heaven; and it came even unto me: upon which when I had fixed mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth, and [j]wild beasts, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But the voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed make thou not common. And this took place thrice, and all were drawn again into heaven. And behold, immediately three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit [k]bade me go with them,

[f] *ctr.* ch.2.38. *ctr.* ch. 19. 5, 6. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
[g] *cf.* ch. 11. 23. *cf.* ch.18.27, 28.
[h] *cf.* vers.29, 30. *cf.* ch. 15. 1, etc.
[i] ch.10.9-22.
[j] *cf.* Tit. 3. 3. *cf.* Is. 65.25.
[k] *cf.* ch.16.7-10.

* Some substitute, and a few add, "the Lord."

of this which would soon find support in the Lord's words to Peter, with the name given to him. In his first epistle we have the development of this, to which Paul, however, gives completeness. The fact anticipated the doctrine; and that which hindered the development of this had now given way (Eph. ii. 14, 15).

Baptism takes here, therefore, another place from that which it had before this. It follows, instead of preceding, the reception of the Spirit. Peter makes this a manifest reason why baptism cannot be denied them: "Can any one forbid water," he asks, "that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" It was not necessarily the place which this was to take henceforth; for after this we find the Jewish disciples of the Baptist (chap. xix. 5, 6), having not only to be baptized, but to have the imposition of hands, in order that they may receive the Spirit. The Gentiles, on the other hand, having had no legal status hitherto, are dealt with in pure grace alone; the ground upon which they are met is manifestly this, and this only: hence God can give way to His love with more simplicity; and He does so, to the astonishment of "those of the circumcision," who find all their own scruples and hesitation set aside with a decisive authority, against which they have no power to protest. To do aught but accept it would be plainly to "withstand God," as Peter himself says. He commands, therefore, that they should be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, and, accepting frankly all the consequences of this, stays with them at their desire for some days.

[4] The history is pursued further, and with the same carefulness of detail, to the recognition of this place given to the Gentiles at Jerusalem itself, notwithstanding the objections on the part of the disciples there. In fact, the eating with men uncircumcised seems to have been heard of, before the way of the grace of God. Peter gives an account of all, therefore, from the beginning;

nothing doubting. And these six [l]brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house, and he [m]told us how he had seen the angel in his house, standing and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, who is surnamed Peter, who shall speak unto thee [n]words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all [o]thy house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit [p]fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I [q]remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but *ye* shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If God then gave unto them the [r]like gift as also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, [s]who was I, that I could withstand God? And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and [t]glorified God, saying, Then indeed hath God given to the nations also [u]repentance unto life.

2 (xi.19-30): A Gentile assembly. 1 (19-21): The free work of the Spirit, independent of the apostles.

2. [1] They then who were [v]scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save [w]only to the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they came to Antioch, spake [x]also to the Greeks,* preaching the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number [y]believed and turned to the Lord.

l ch. 10.23,45.
m ch. 10.30-32
n *cf.* Jno. 6. 63. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Rom. 10. 17.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 31.
p ch. 10. 44.
q ch. 1. 5. *cf.* Jno. 14. 26.
r *cf.* ch. 15. 9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
s *cf.* ch. 10. 47. *cf.* Rom. 9. 20.
t *cf.* ch. 21. 19, 20.
u Lk. 24. 47. *cf.* ch. 20. 21.
v ch. 8. 1-4.
w *cf.* ch. 10. 28.
x *cf.* Jno. 10. 16. *cf.* ch. 13. 46-48.
y *cf.* Rom. 10. 12, 13.

* The larger number of the MSS. have "Hellenists"; but this is quite against the context.

and all resistance is silenced by the simple narration. The question with which he ends it is quite unanswerable. They needs must glorify God that He has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life. Not even a breath is heard about the need of circumcising them to keep the law of Moses; the act of God is too conspicuous; He is so completely in it from end to end. And thus the all-important transformation is effected without a dissenting voice.

2. [1] The principle being now established, the free action of the Spirit is seen in raising up at Antioch what becomes characteristically a Gentile assembly. For this there is not even the putting forth of a man like Philip. None are allowed to be conspicuous in this work, for the eye to fasten upon: God would make it manifestly His own. Scattered by the same persecution which had been already made to minister to the need of Samaria, Phenicia, Cyprus and Antioch are visited by those whose hearts, filled with the grace which they have themselves experienced, lead them out to minister to the need of others. But at first it is to Jews only that the good news is proclaimed; the effect also is not apparent,—certainly seems in marked contrast with the success among the Greeks, to whom at last they turn. The hand of the Lord is with them, and a great number of converts is the result of their evangelistic labor. It is remarkable how officialism is discredited in all this. We do not know the name of a single person used in the work. The great apostle of the Gentiles is yet in comparative obscurity in his native city; Barnabas is not yet upon the scene: God is acting in conspicuous sovereignty by what instruments He will; and this in the case of the first Gentile assembly is surely designed to attract our notice. Antioch is to "stand over against" Jerusalem, as even its name may imply, as identified with such freer action; and it is noticeable that the disciples are first called Christians here in Antioch. In Jerusalem they were but "the sect of the Nazarenes."

2 (22-26): Confirmation and building up.

[22] And the [z]report concerning them came to the ears of the assembly that was in Jerusalem; and they [a]sent forth Barnabas, that he should travel as far as Antioch; [23] who when he had arrived and seen the grace of God, was [b]glad, and exhorted them all, that with [c]purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord; [24] for he was a good man, and [d]full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith; and a great multitude was [e]added to the Lord. [25] And he went forth to [f]Tarsus, to seek Saul; [26] and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And so it was that for a [g]whole year they were gathered together in the assembly, and taught a great multitude; and that the disciples were [h]called Christians first in Antioch.

z ver. 1.
a *cf.* ch. 15. 22.
b ver. 18. *ctr.* ch. 13. 45.
c *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 86. 11. *cf.* Dan 1. 8. *cf.* Eph. 4. 14, 15.
d ch. 6. 5. *cf.* ch. 4. 36, 37.
e *cf.* ch. 5. 14.
f ch. 9. 30.
g ch. 18. 11. ch. 19. 10. *cf.* ch. 17. 2. *ctr.* ch. 8. 39.
h ch. 26. 28. 1 Pet. 4. 16; *cf.* Jas. 2. 7.

[2] Still the new work is not to drift into independence of the old, but to be acknowledged and accepted at Jerusalem itself, as in the case of the reception of Cornelius and his company at Cæsarea. The report, therefore, reaching the Jewish capital, Barnabas is sent forth to go as far as Antioch,—a well-chosen representative. He does not go with authority, nor seek to exercise it; nor has he in hand, as the apostles in their visit to Samaria, to supply any deficiency in the condition of these Syrian brethren, who have evidently received the Spirit, as they did at Cæsarea, without need of apostles, or of imposition of hands. Barnabas sees the grace of God in them, and is glad, and simply exhorts them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord;—a word never uncalled for. It is his character that is dwelt upon in this connection, not his office: "he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith;" and this is seen in its effect, doubtless, in the progress of the work there: "a great multitude was added to the Lord."

It is Barnabas who is the means of introducing Saul into this field of labor. We may naturally suppose that he recognized in him a special fitness for the great work now beginning; but we see how simply his connection is brought about with the field to which from the commencement of his apostleship he is destined. God is not in haste, and His purposes are worked out often in what we may call the homeliest ways. The man who had introduced him to the apostles at Jerusalem, and who there had been witness to his energy and power, now seeks him out at Tarsus, no great distance off, and Saul returns with him to Antioch. There the work still progresses; and there the Christians get what is henceforth their distinctive name. We are not told whence it came; but the argument is just that Jews who refused Jesus as the Christ could not have given it to them; and that we only find it elsewhere, either in the mouth of those outside, as king Agrippa, or where the thought is of one suffering as such from the hands of unbelievers, as Peter uses it (1 Pet. iv. 16). It was therefore given by men outside, as one would infer, and in connection with the notable work accomplished at this time. The disciples were no more looked at as a mere Jewish sect. The weaning-time of Isaac was accomplished; and, while the children of the bondwoman "mocked" at the feebleness of the true heirs of grace, and cast them out, it was really they themselves who were being cast out. The Church's unity in Christ was being proclaimed, even by the lips of unbelievers; the One Name covering alike Jew and Gentile, while it separated them from all, whether Jew or Gentile, who did not confess Him.

[3] The Spirit of God gives a little glimpse, in closing this portion, of the recognition on the part of the assembly at Antioch of their relationship and obligation to those from whom they had received spiritual blessings so great. Indeed it is from a prophet from Jerusalem that they have warning of the approach of the famine which occasions this ministry, and which seems especially

3 (27-30): The return ministry.

3 In these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, by name [i]Agabus, stood up, and signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the inhabited earth; which came to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples, every man [j]according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea: which also they did, [k]sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

[i] *cf.* ch. 21. 10.

[j] *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 6, 7. *cf.* ch. 4. 34, 35.

[k] ch. 12. 25. *cf.* Rom. 15. 26, 27.

to have affected the province of Judea. It is the first time that Christian prophets are mentioned in the New Testament; although they seem not to have been few in number, and are placed second only to the apostles themselves in the enumeration of gifts bestowed by Christ upon the Church. Prophecy also, as we shall find elsewhere, is in a special way characteristic of Christianity. Unsuccessional, springing out of close intercourse and communion with God, the disclosure of His mind so as to bring souls into His Presence,—it should be and is, in closest relation with the rent veil of the Sanctuary and the ability to draw near to God which mark the present period. Prediction was never more than a comparatively small and variable part of it; although this is what we find in the prophesying of Agabus upon the only two occasions in which he appears in the history. Indeed he is a prophet of sorrow at both times, although of that which God overrules for good; but then, of what sorrow may not this be said?

The disciples do not think little of this ministry of means, when they choose the two most prominent among them to administer it; and Barnabas and Saul, on the other hand, do not think it a matter that they should not be burdened with. Indeed, we know from the epistles of the latter what he thought upon the subject. In those fresh days, when it could be said that every one gave "according to his ability," how much love—divine love—was there not expressed in it! How different when it would have rather to be said, as in many of the sad days of decline since then, "every one a little of his superfluity, and the richest in proportion least of all!" Everything is degraded or spiritualized by the heart that is in it,—or is not in it.

We hear, too, for the first time, of "elders" in the Jewish assemblies, who, though doubtless an adoption from what was an immemorial custom in Israel (for we have no account of any distinct origin), yet seem from the epistle of Peter to be hardly officially appointed (1 Pet. v. 1), but rather the natural result of wisdom and experience attaching to age, which would make the "elder" the natural leader in the counsels of a people. In the Gentile assemblies we read of their appointment afterwards, where (and perhaps because) the patriarchal custom did not have the same recognition; and there with some restrictions which were only necessary to right "oversight," which (and not preaching) was that which was their work. The incidental notice here hardly requires the examination of the subject of eldership which it must receive when we come to the epistle to Timothy. It is well to note, however, that neither was it a gift, nor did it need one for qualification, which was almost wholly moral; while for preaching or teaching there needed no authorization from man, but the gift entailed the responsibility of using it, and manifested itself wherever there was an ear to hear. But all this must wait for its development elsewhere.

Subd. 6.

1. While the Church is thus being enlarged, unhappy Israel becomes only more hostile to the followers of Him whom they have crucified, and a new king (Herod Agrippa I.) rises up to give their enmity effect. Though we may be little able to interpret the details, yet the circumstances undoubtedly suggest an anticipation of the last days, when the lawless king will exalt himself against

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. xii.)

Israel in full unbelief under their apostate king; but with God's hand over it.

1 (1-17): In God's hand, not the king's.

1. NOW about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to do [l]hurt to some of the assembly. And he slew [m]James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he went on to take Peter also; (and they were the [n]days of unleavened bread;) whom having [o]seized he put in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the passover to bring him out to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison; but [p]prayer was made unceasingly * by the assembly to God for him. And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping [q]between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards before the door kept the prison. And lo, an [r]angel of [the] Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains [s]fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went forth, and followed him; and knew not that it was true, which was done by the angel, but [t]thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which [u]opened to them

l *cf.* ch. 8. 1. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
m *cf.* Matt. 20. 20-23.
n ch. 20. 6. *cf.* Ex. 12 34, 39 with 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.
o ch. 4. 3. ch. 5. 18-23. ch. 16. 23, 24.
p *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* Phile. 1. 19. *cf.* Phil. 22.
q *cf.* ch. 21. 33.
r *cf.* ch. 5. 19. *cf.* Ps. 34. 7. *ctr.* Matt. 26. 53, 54.
s *cf.* ch. 16. 26. *cf.* Ps. 116. 16.
t *cf.* ch. 10. 17. *cf.* Ps. 126. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 2, 3.
u ch. 5. 19. *cf.* Mk. 16. 3, 4.

* Literally, "intensely."

God, assuming for himself divine honors. We have here, also, in effect, the slain and the spared remnant represented in the opposite lot of James and Peter: the one given up, as it might seem, so strangely, his service but begun, to a violent death, while for the other an angel must be sent from heaven, to rescue him in a wonderful manner "from all the expectation of the people of the Jews," about to glut their evil desire with the death of another apostle of Jesus. Yet James was one of the three specially in the Lord's confidence, along with John and Peter. His life is to us a blank, and his day went down at noon! How little can we see of the divine ways! and, if we judge a course merely by its results, how surely shall we misjudge! In the events to which we seem to be looking forward here, those that are martyred under the beast have their part in the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4-6); while the spared remnant has but its portion on earth: and thus will eternity reverse our present apprehension of how many things!

The story of Peter's deliverance is told vividly and in detail; but while it yields much food for meditation, it scarcely requires an interpreter. It may appear even too far out of the usual course of God's ways to find ready application to our common lives; yet it is the same God with whom we have to do; and, if we had but skill to trace His ways with us more, we might find more reason to wonder at the essential resemblances than to be perplexed at the apparent differences. The veil is over His governmental dealings, for it is a dispensation of faith and not of sight; but it is yet the part of faith to take away the veil, and through all disguises to recognize the well-known features of the Love that seeks to be apprehended by those who are the objects of it;

of its own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street; and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and [v]delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had become conscious [of it], he came to the house of Mary the mother of John who was surnamed Mark, where many were [w]gathered together and praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maidservant came to listen, by name Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art [x]mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his [y]angel. But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened and saw him, they were amazed. But he, beckoning to them with the hand to hold their peace, related to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, Tell these things to [z]James, and to the brethren. And he [a]departed, and went unto another place.

v *cf.* Dan. 3. 17, 28. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

w ver. 5. *cf.* Matt. 18. 19, 20.

x *cf.* Is. 65. 24. *cf.* ch. 2. 13.

y *cf.* Matt. 18. 10 with 2 Cor. 5. 8. *ctr.* Lk. 24. 36-43.

z ch. 15. 13. ch. 21. 18. *cf.* Gal. 1. 19. *cf.* Mk. 15. 40. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* Jude 1.

a *cf.* Jno. 8. 59. *cf.* Matt. 10. 23.

2 (18-23): The destruction of the adversary.

2. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small [b]stir among the soldiers what had become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should

b *cf.* ch. 5. 22, 23.

and that before the veil is drawn away, as soon it shall be, and we shall know, even as we are known.

The angels too are still "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall inherit salvation;" and we easily remember how in Elisha's day the eyes that God opened could see the "chariots and horses of fire" round about the man who to common sight looked absolutely unprotected. Did we seek with more longing that intercourse with the unseen which surely we may attain, how would our spiritual vision gain in clearness, what recompense should we have from Him, who still as of old, "satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"! There are other prison-doors, and better guarded than these that could not hold Peter, which may need to be loosed for us, that we may go forth into the great spiritual world around us! and the prison perhaps is one out of which, in reality, we have hardly been, or not been,—then most secure, of course, when we scarcely recognize that we are shut in at all, or, therefore, think of deliverance! Perhaps the gates would open to us of their own accord, if we on our part were not so well satisfied to have them shut.*

2. Israel, as we see, is going onward to doom; yet they have a king under whom now the whole land is once more united. They will in fact have a political revival at the end, when all will seem to be theirs except the life from God without which all is death still, and only worse corruption. The picture of the wilful king is, no doubt, here, as has already been remarked, though it may be slightly drawn. Solemn it is to see, that whether faintly or plainly to be seen, wherever Christ is rejected Antichrist appears. So it ever is: "I have

* For some reason, the Spirit gives the name of the damsel who announces Peter's deliverance. It is Rhoda—a rose.

Peter's angel is evidently to be understood as his spirit, without his body. They thought he had been put to death. S. R.

be [c]put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cæsarea, and tarried there. Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon; and they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their [d]friend, they asked for peace, because their country was [e]nourished by the king's. And upon a set day, Herod [f]arrayed himself in royal apparel, and seated himself upon the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a [g]god, and not of a man! And immediately the angel of [the] Lord [h]smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was [i]eaten of worms, and expired.

3 (24, 25): The return.

3. But the [j]word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had [k]fulfilled their ministration, taking with them [l]John who was surnamed Mark.

c *cf.* ch. 16. 27. *ctr.* Matt. 28. 11-15.
d *ctr.* ch. 24. 26.
e *cf.* 1 Kl. 5. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 27. 17.
f *cf.* ch. 25. 23. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 11.
g *cf.* Dan. 4. 29-33. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3 12. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18.
h *cf.* 2 Kl. 19. 35. *cf.* 2 Chro. 26. 16-21.
i *cf.* Is. 51. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 14. 11. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5.

24. *j* ch. 6. 7; ch. 19. 20. *k* ch. 11. 29, 30; *cf.* ch. 14. 26; *cf.* Rom. 15. 28. *l* ver. 12; ch. 13. 5

come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive." In every individual case, such is the spiritual law: and there is nothing arbitrary or strange about it; in it men are but a law to themselves, in fact: there are but these two alternatives; not to choose the one is in itself to choose the other.

Of all this one can say little, however, as to its bearing upon what is before us in the Acts. It is easy to see that we have in this part the divergence of two roads that never can meet. Israel and the Church here part. Save for a moment to reaffirm the freedom of the Gentile from the legal yoke, the history returns no more to Jerusalem, until the last sad days of Paul's arrest and imprisonment from which he escapes only by the appeal to Cæsar, which carries him eventually to Rome itself. Jerusalem and Rome are alike the prisons of the gospel, however much it be true nevertheless, that "the word of God is not bound." But this lies yet a good way before us.

3. This portion does not close with the death of Herod, but with the increase and multiplication of the word of God; which in fact is now not merely to have large fruit among the Gentiles, but to expand into a glorious revelation of things hitherto kept secret—the manifold wisdom and the marvelous love of God, which is to make the Church for all eternity the temple of His praise.

It is Paul, as we know, who is to be in this respect the "completer" of the word of God (Col. i. 25); and it is Paul whose course we are now especially to follow, himself the most perfect display of grace towards the "chief of sinners," and now to proclaim that grace in an unequalled manner, the record of which we have in his fourteen epistles. The Acts does not give us indeed, in any sufficient manner, the doctrine of Paul. It presents us rather with the character of his work, as we shall see, together with the reception given it by the legalist and by the world,—a lesson for the days since then, by which we must seek to profit, as God may give.

From Jerusalem Barnabas and Saul now return. The ministers of Gentile love to their brethren of the circumcision, the opposition that we shall but too soon see springing up comes from no failure upon the part of him who once wished himself accursed from Christ for his kindred according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 3). That they would not receive his testimony he had been already warned (chap. xxii. 18); yet his heart could not be kept back in its overflowing affection for them. We are to see how it was repaid,—alas! and yet no wonder; was it not Christ, and Him crucified, whom Paul proclaimed? and to the people who had crucified Him? Such is man! and in the sovereign grace of the God of grace alone is there hope for any.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. xiii.–xx.)

The Mysteries Opened.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. xiii., xiv.)

Foundation principles.

1 (xiii. 1-3): The divine call.

1. NOW there were in Antioch, in the [m]assembly that was there, [n]prophets and teachers: [o]Barnabas, and Symeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, [p]foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and [q]Saul. And as they were [r]ministering to the Lord

m cf. 11. 19–24.
n cf. Eph. 4. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29.
o ch. 4. 36, etc.
p cf. 1 Cor. 1. 26–29.
q ch. 8. 1, etc.
r cf. ch. 6. 4.

The mention of Mark as accompanying the return to Antioch has a moral with it, which develops later. He was sister's son to Barnabas (Col. iv. 10); and this touch of nature prevails in the end to separate the two zealous laborers with whom he is for the present united. And yet Mark—here the failing servant—is by and by the one who records the Lord's own unfailing service in the second Gospel; and of whom the untiring Paul will one day say, "He is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11). How will grace triumph at the last over all our failures!

DIV. 3.

It has been already said that we must not expect to have any full opening of the mysteries here, as we have in the epistles. The New Testament is characterized by them: "Let a man so account of us," says the apostle, "as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). There are "mysteries of the Kingdom" (Matt. xiii. 11), as the Church also is one. Even the "blindness in part" which "is happened unto Israel" is a mystery (Rom. xi. 25); and the partaking of the Gentile in the promise in Christ on equal terms with the Jew (Eph. iii. 6) is a mystery also. Thus we can speak of mysteries being opened here without implying that the truth of the Church is declared as Paul elsewhere declares it. The mystery is the one assembly of Jew and Gentile, and Christ's epistle in the world, with the ministration of righteousness and life, and of the Spirit, in contrast with the legal ministration of death and of condemnation. As this, we shall not wonder if the enemy would use the Jew in his unbelief against it, and the legal principle which God, having accomplished His end with it, has set aside. This will appear, in fact, as Satan's great endeavor from the beginning. We have even a typical presentation of this as an enforcement of warning, in Elymas. The attempt of the Pharisaic converts to put the yoke of the law upon the Gentiles is a more open endeavor, and from within. The "ministration of righteousness" we find at the Pisidian Antioch.

SUBD. 1.

The first subdivision here naturally comprises the account of the first mission from Antioch, constituted thus, instead of Jerusalem, the center of the new work. It gives us evidently the foundations laid by one who was a "wise master-builder," and with this the reception accorded to the grace proclaimed. This lies upon the surface; how much that must be underneath may the Spirit of God disclose to us as we take up what is here!

1. We have first the divine call, which must in some way be repeated, wherever profitable labor is to be done after this fashion. The Spirit of God is here pleased to make known to us that all the separation and guidance of the Lord's servants and messengers is from Himself. How strange and incongruous is the thought of "ordination" which so attaches to it in the minds of many! For, in the first place, both Barnabas and Saul are expressly named among the "prophets and teachers" ministering to the Lord in Antioch at this time. They were not, then, to be ordained to such an office, who had already been a good while in it; and surely not by men who could not be supposed to be any way

and [s]fasting, the [t]Holy Spirit said, Separate to me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have [u]called them. Then, having [v]fasted and prayed, and [w]laid hands upon them, they [x]let [them] go.

s *cf.* ch. 10. 30. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 7. t *cf.* ch. 8. 29. *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7. u *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 4–11. v *cf.* ver. 2.

cf. Phil. 3. 3. w *cf.* Gal. 2. 9; *cf.* ch. 15. 40; *ctr.* ch. 6. 6; *ctr.* 1 Tim. 4. 14. x ch. 14. 26.

superior, if equal, to themselves! One would surely say that the idea of equals lifting equals to a higher position than themselves, and which after all was only the position they had held before, would be too contradictory to be entertained by any serious mind. But if not, this was no ordination to an office at all.

Again, there was only one degree higher than those of these prophets and teachers, and that was the apostle's. Paul was an apostle, as all admit, in the fullest and most eminent way; but he distinctly declares himself (Gal. i. 1) "an apostle, not of men, nor *through* man:" men neither called him, nor ministered in this in any way. It was not then to this that he and Barnabas were called at Antioch.

We are told, moreover, to what it was they *were* called: for, at the end of the special work to which in fact they immediately set out, they return to Antioch, and there it is added, "whence they had been committed to the grace of God *for the work which they fulfilled.*" It is as certain, therefore, as Scripture itself can make it, that the work in question was not an apostle's, prophet's, or teacher's office, but simply an evangelistic mission to the needy fields of Asia Minor.

Indeed, by this separation of Saul and Barnabas from their number at the Spirit's word, is only made more distinctly apparent that free and necessary work on His part which has been continually coming into more prominence in this book. He chooses, He sends; nothing is rightly done apart from this. Fit it was, the Spirit being come to take charge of all that should be done in the Name of Christ on earth, that this choice and will of the Spirit should now be emphasized in the strongest way. Judaism was a system of law, with a strong principle of succession in it; where in the most sacred things, as in the priesthood, son succeeded father; where the elders ruled as elders (though in this there was a right and necessary element, as has been said, and as we shall have more fully to see hereafter); the only exception to this (and it is a streak of blessed light through all the darkness of the history) is in the reservation of the prophet's office in the hand of God alone. Elsewhere, with the succession of kings, priests, elders, the flesh came in to defile and mar in every shameful and terrible way possible; while the prophets, with God's call and message, were the men of God in their several days. Each could say, after the pattern of Paul, "neither of men nor by man." Prophecy in this character of it, as has been already said, is of the very spirit of Christianity. It breathes of intercourse with God. And with God manifested in Christ, the sanctuary opened, who can wonder that the apostle should say, "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues;" "covet spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy;" for "ye may *all* prophesy" (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 31).

In the shadow of Judaism, (as we see in the disastrous return to it, now for so many centuries,) succession—that is, dependence upon flesh and blood—comes in naturally everywhere. The simple rule of God—the conscience before Him alone—cannot be permitted. The prophet call, the prophet voice,—these have less room for them in such legal systems than in Judaism itself: naturally, again; for this is the veil reintroduced, and therefore darker than anything that God could ever have permitted. At the time to which we have come in the book before us, Christianity was coming into her proper freedom from the yoke of bondage, the last remains of the shadow passing from her spirit; and in the new freedom, that it might be freedom, the rule of God was to be recognized in its full and sweet reality. The Christian was "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," which meant both of these two inseparable things. Thus, of necessity, in the highest department of Christian work, the rule of the Spirit must be above

2 (xiii. 4-12): The conflict with the enemy in the Jew.

2. They, therefore, being [y] sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to [z] Cyprus. And having arrived at Salamis, they announced the word of God in the [a] synagogues of the Jews; and they had also [b] John as [their] attendant. And when they had gone through all the isle as far as Paphos, they found a certain magian, a [c] false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus, who was with the [d] proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding.

y ver. 2. *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7.
z ch. 4. 36. *cf.* ch. 15. 39.
a ver. 14. ch. 14. 1. ch. 17. 1, 2. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16.
b ch. 12. 25.
c cf. ch. 8. 9 11. *cf.* ch. 19. 13-20.

cf. 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10; *cf.* Rev. 3. 9. *d cf.* ch. 28. 7; *ctr.* ch. 18. 12-17.

all emphasized. It was only the assertion of what was now to be the universal principle; but it is here expressed in a manner the most distinct; not by a Voice within the soul itself merely, but by one that demanded and obtained the obedience of the gathered company,—to which they openly set their seals; for the imposition of hands was the sign of identification and fellowship with those to whom the call was—with their obedience to it.

They were all in all seriousness of spirit waiting upon the Lord when the word came; and afterwards when they laid their hands upon them, prayer and fasting accompanied the action. But those who acted with this true and earnest interest assumed no authority in it: they "let them go,"—not "sent them away." The "sending forth," as now directly said, was of the Spirit.*

2. The journey through Cyprus has but one point in it upon which the historian dwells. Salamis is only mentioned to state that they announced the word of God there in the synagogues of the Jews. The rule, "to the Jew first," was observed in this case; nor have we any record of work among the Gentiles. Among the Jews also the fact of the preaching is not accompanied by any statement as to the effect; there may have been such; it would be natural, under such preachers, and on a mission directed by the Spirit of God, to reason that there must have been; but it is certain that it is only the fact that is given us here, and not its consequences. The Jew is still sought by divine grace, and sought in an especial manner also. The giving up of the nation as such does not mean any turning away of the offer of salvation from them. The first step upon the road here makes plain that the love that has been with them seeks them still. The breach is upon their side, not on His.

This seems to connect morally with the account which is now given of the Jew at Paphos; scarcely a Jew indeed, one would say, so perverted, heathenized, demonized, is he. All the more, however, is he the true picture of the Jew, or of Judaism, fallen by opposition to Christ into the power of the enemy, and then becoming the most virulent of foes. Such is this Bar-jesus, with his fair name and his practice of occult arts, false prophet through and through. He is the worst hindrance to the Gentile inquirer, stout refuser of salvation on his own account; and that, whether outside the professing church, or (as he will be by-and-by) within it. He is to be the great antagonist of Paul all through, bringing him at last into the Roman prison, in which for so many generations he was shut up; for without the Jew the Roman could have done little.

Plainly, it is not the opposition of the moment at which we are looking here, but something far deeper and more lasting;—lasting until the "mist and darkness," come upon the Jew for his opposition to the truth, shall pass away, in the dawn of a day beyond the present. Bar-jesus, living reality as he was, is

* While the names of the prophets and teachers are given, it is not to be inferred that the ministry and fasting were only by these, but rather that the whole assembly at Antioch was engaged. Some of the gifts are mentioned, and these were doubtless the channels of the Spirit's communication, but on their return we find Paul and Barnabas gathering the whole assembly to rehearse the accomplishment of the work to which they had been committed (chap. xiv. 26, 27). It would thus seem that all was done with the fellowship of the entire assembly: and this seems to agree with the teaching as to the local assembly being the habitation of the Spirit. S. R.

He called to him Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magian (for so is his name interpreted) [e] withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes upon him, and said, O full of all deceit and recklessness,* [f] son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease perverting the Lord's right ways? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be [g] blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell upon him a mist and darkness; and he went about, seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, seeing what was done, [h] believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

e *cf.* ver. 45. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 14–16.

f *cf.* Jno. 8. 38–44.

g *cf.* Gen. 19. 11. *cf.* John 9. 39 with Rom. 11. 7–10, 25.

h *cf.* Jno. 4. 53.

*Or, "subtlety."

nevertheless a type of something far more enduring than himself, and to us all more important. It will be good for us to stand still a little, and contemplate that to which our attention is here by the Spirit of God pointed,—the universal foe of the grace of the gospel.

"God gave man the law." This, which is almost the universal cry (hardly accurate as it is), is an argument which no one can contest, and which, it is thought, makes it really heresy to take seriously what Paul says about a Christian being "dead" to it. You may put in a word, and say, "dead to the (ceremonial) law." Then it will be all right to say so. But unfortunately the apostle, no matter what his apologists may invent for him, will not permit this. For the law of which he is speaking in the very place in which he says this (Rom. vii. 4–7), is at any rate that which said, "Thou shalt not covet," the last commandment graved upon those tables of stone shown, it is argued, by their very material to be absolutely permanent.

If this be true, then, as undoubtedly the Jew thought, he has certainly matter of contention with Paul about it. But the Jew went further than this, and upon the same warrant of "This do and thou shalt live," denied Paul's whole gospel of "righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 6), spite of his testimonies from Abraham and David. We shall find all this carefully gone through in the epistles, and we have no intention of taking it up here; but here is the fundamental controversy through the Christian centuries, within, more than with those outside the profession. Ritualism, Romanism, (how much more than these!) are just Judaism come into Christianity; but yet not purely that,—not Judaism as God gave it,—but with an element introduced which is of the enemy. Judaism was not an enemy to the truth of God; the law was a handmaid—Hagar. It pointed to Christ its end and fulfilment, not only in its types, but also by its own manifest incompetence to bring to God. Its "ministration" was of death and condemnation, with the veil before the face of God! The word from His lips was "None can see Me and live." Thus the finger of hope could only point forward to the "new covenant," which in the mere announcement of it made the first old (Heb. viii. 13). But in the new ritualism of Rome and of her daughters, while the shadows of Judaism are darker than of old, no finger is found pointing beyond itself,—no glory of Christ illumines them. He is come and gone, and has left still a closed up sanctuary, and a gospel of doubt! The glory is still in the face of Moses; the veil is upon His own! But this is Judaism with its heart dead within it, and the light that plays over it weird, fantastic, demonic. Its mysteries are magic; the power it craves oppressive, not protective; its yoke is tyrannous, and its burden heavy. It is Elymas the sorcerer, courting the powers of the world, and opposing the gospel of grace in the apostle. It is Paul of all men whom this does oppose.

3 (xiii. 13-41): The proclamation.

3. Now [i]Paul and his company, having sailed from Paphos, came to Perga of Pamphylia; and John [j]departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the [k]synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down. And after the [l]reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, speak. And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that [m]fear God, hearken! The God of this people Israel [n]chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and [o]led them forth with a high arm out of it. And for about [p]forty years of time he nursed* them in the wilderness.

*The common text, with many MSS., reads "bore their manners."

i *cf.* ver 9. *cf.* Phil.3.7 *cf.*2 Cor.12. 11.
j *cf.* ch. 15. 37-39. *cf.* Col.4.10. *cf.* 2 Tim.4. 11.
k ver. 5.
l ch. 15. 21. *cf.* Lk.4.16-27.
m ver. 26. *cf.* ch. 10. 2.
n *cf.* Deut.7. 6-8. *cf.* Ps. 105. 6, 43.
o Ex. 13. 14, 16. *cf.* Ps. 105. 37.
p Ex. 16. 35. ch. 7. 36.

The conflict with the Jew manifests Saul as Paul, the name which he henceforth retains. The contrast between the two is such as could not escape notice. Saul, the man of Benjamin, necessarily brings up the figure of that other Saul, the king of men, such as the people "asked," head and shoulders above the common stature, in contrast with Paul, the "little," the man "less than the least of all saints," and only the chief of sinners. But this is he who can now be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Paul is the fittest name possible for the man who is to be taken into the third heaven, and lead us into the open sanctuary, and present us "perfect in Christ Jesus."

It is not from the converted Sergius that Paul derives his name, the most unlikely thing possible for one so free from all human dependence. While, at the same time, it is quite in keeping with all else here that the man who escapes from the snare of the Jew should be also a Paul—a "little" one. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." In Scripture, while the history is ever truth, the fullest reason of things is always the spiritual one; for He who is Infinite Wisdom governs all, and with an absolute control of all material, which if we accredited it, and realized the service of love in which it is made to work, we should see the glory of God indeed.

Upon the opposers of truth the mist and darkness of error must surely settle down. Woe to him who resists at any point the light of God! It is by the cover of darkness alone that he can do it; and he who shuts his eyes to any part of truth will find that he can make no terms with the error to which he surrenders. In the purport of his act he shuts out everything; and it is only the mercy of God which can put limit to the terms of an absolute surrender to the "authority of darkness."

3. The conflict at Paphos is thus but a typical introduction to what follows it; in which we are now to find what the reception of the gospel of Christ will be in a world so needy of it, so ignorant of its need. The conversion of the proconsul is all that we hear of in this way in Paphos; for we have not all that took place, but all that the Spirit of God saw fit to communicate. Cyprus is now left behind, and "Paul and his company" cross over to the mainland, to Perga in Pamphylia, on their onward way. There John their assistant leaves, when the work is just beginning, and returns to Jerusalem. With the general reticence of Scripture in such matters, we are told nothing of his motives. We may infer, as it is usual to do, and as the point at which he leaves and his return home naturally would indicate, that the difficulties of the way were making themselves felt with one whose strength was not sufficiently in God for

And when he had [q]destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land for an [r]inheritance; and after these things he gave them [s]judges [to the end of] about four hundred and fifty years,* till [t]Samuel the prophet. And then they [u]asked for a king; and God gave them [v]Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had [w]removed him, he raised up [x]David for [their] king; to whom also he testified and said, I have [y]found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. Of this man's [z]seed hath God brought† unto Israel, according to promise, a Saviour, Jesus, when [a]John had proclaimed before his coming in person‡ a

q ch. 7. 45. Josh. 12. 1, etc.
r Josh. 14. 1. etc. Ps. 78. 55.
s Ju. 2. 16. Ju. 3. 9, etc.
t ch. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Sa. 7. 6, 17.
u 1 Sa. 8. 5, 19, 20.
v 1 Sa. 10. 1, 24.
w 1 Sa. 15. 23. *cf.* Hos. 13. 11.
x 1 Sa. 16. 1, 11-13.
y Ps. 89. 20. 1 Sa. 13. 14.
z Matt. 1. 1. Rom. 1. 3.
a Mat. 3. 1-3.

*The time is in some of the earliest MSS. put in connection with "He gave them their land" etc.

†Or "raised up;" which has the consent of many MSS. and the Syriac versions.

‡Literally, "the presence of his entry,"—the presence which his coming made actual.

the demand. The path of faith will surely be too severe a test for all that is not faith; and all may not be faith that at first seems so. Faith is strengthened in the path, and does not fail because of difficulties which it supposes, and by which it is exercised: but the unreal is sifted out, and the true state of things is made apparent. Not that there was not reality in John, as we realize in his recovery afterwards. He needed, no doubt, the lesson, to learn which Paul's faithfulness also might be requisite, when again he offered himself for what he failed in now. How good when we truly learn by our failures the way not to fail! A different thing, indeed, from the constant failure to which so many seem only to become habituated, and easily plead their weakness, as if they found no more strength in God than in themselves.*

With the sorrow of this defection on them, the travelers pass on from Perga; and next we hear of them at Antioch in Pisidia, where we have the proclamation of Paul's gospel, in a way that "stands over against" the proclamation to the Jews by Peter at Jerusalem. Antioch of Pisidia ("the well-watered plains?") may give us a hint of this, as the other Antioch (of Syria—Aram, the "high" or "exalted") has been seen to "stand over against" Jerusalem in another respect. The address here is indeed to Israelites, and in the synagogue also, but taking in the proselytes in a distinct way, too,—"ye that fear God." The announcement, besides, of justification for every one who believeth in Jesus gathers in the Gentiles in numbers the next sabbath, inflaming, alas! the jealousy of the Jews. As a consequence of this, the turning to the Gentiles is definitely announced. Peter declares forgiveness of sins to those who repent and are baptized. Paul, justification in Christ for the believer. No apostle except Paul in terms declares this; although John here, as in other ways, comes nearest to him; indeed, the difference in this respect is scarcely more than verbal. The bold assurance as to the impotence of Moses' law, in the face of the synagogue, is characteristic of Paul.

The apostle begins by reminding them how God had brought Israel out of Egypt, and planted them in the land. After this, while through their sins the time was indeed disastrous, He had raised them up judges to the end of about 450 years, till Samuel—another memorable deliverance. There was more disaster, for the people would have a king; but here also, after forty years of trial, God overtopped their failure with the gift of one after His own heart; with him

*May there not be a suggestion too that Mark shrunk from the evident tendency to reach Gentiles? This is the theme of this part of the book, and the mention of his return to Jerusalem is significant. S. R.

baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not he; but behold, there [b]cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us* is the word of this [c]salvation sent. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they [d]knew him not, nor the voices of the [e]prophets which are read every sabbath, [f]fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found [g]no cause of death [in him], they besought Pilate that he might be slain. And when they had [h]fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and placed him in a [i]tomb. But God [j]raised him from the dead, and he was [k]seen for many days, of those who came up with him from Galilee unto Jerusalem,—men who are now his [l]witnesses unto the people. And *we* declare to

* While this is the better supported reading, "you" is not a weak one and certainly agrees with the context.

[b] Jno. 1. 26, 27.
[c] *cf.* ch.4.12. *cf.* ver. 47.
[d] *cf.* Jno. 1. 10. 11. *cf.* ch. 3. 17.
[e] *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23, 27. *cf.* Rom. 3. 21.
[f] *cf.* ch. 2.23 *cf.* ch. 17. 3. *cf.* Jno. 19. 11.
[g] Mk. 14.55. *cf.* Mk. 15. 10.
[h] *cf.* Lk. 18. 31. *cf.* Jno. 19. 30.
[i] Matt. 27. 59, 60. Jno. 19. 41, 42.
[j] ch. 2. 24. *cf.* Rom.6.4.
[k] ch. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor.15. 5-7.
[l] ch. 1. 8. ch. 2. 32.

the promise of a Saviour in his line. There was then a weary interval, which for his purpose the speaker can pass over; at last, after a needed baptism of repentance proclaimed to Israel, the Saviour came. All had known John; and he had borne public witness to the coming after him of One with regard to whom he was not worthy to do a menial's office. His salvation whom John had heralded was now being declared to the residents at Antioch.

A strange story indeed, of a smitten and slain Saviour! slain in accordance with their prophecies, by a people who refused the testimony of the prophets. Causelessly slain, yet His death had broken the bonds of death, and God had raised Him in an exceptional manner from among the dead: a thing borne witness to by many witnesses.

The apostle had testimony of his own which he could have added, as we know; but he prefers to make his appeal to what they had in their hand, the Scriptures which, thank God, are in our hand also. He appeals to three special texts as to the fulfilment of this promise.

The first is the second psalm, to which Peter also had appealed. God had owned a Man on earth—His anointed King on Zion—as His begotten Son. This was the claim which, as made by Jesus, the scribes so stoutly resisted. That any *man* should dare, in that sense, to call God his Father, was in itself, whatever he might offer in proof, incredible and monstrous. All His glorious works were nullified by this claim. Yet there it was, upon the face of their own scriptures, true certainly as to *some* Man: so that, if He had *not* claimed it, He could not have been the Christ of God! Thus the very objection that they made was proof rather for, than proof against Him. Jesus was in fact the One raised up of God to them in fulfilment of the promise. Did they but recall that psalm,—and how could an Israelite forget it?—they might see how the very controversy of Israel and of the kings of the earth with Him was recorded in it,—the vain attempt "against Jehovah and against His Christ." Did not He who sat in the heavens laugh? What could they do with Him they had safely guarded in His sepulcre?—with the Risen One whom they had helped so manifestly to proclaim? If they had His body, they had only to produce it, to quench all this joy that had so strangely arisen over the grave of a Crucified Man. But everywhere that Cross itself became a triumph! The Crucified had become glorified on earth; was it not the reflection of a brighter and heavenly glory?

you glad tidings,—the [m]promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled this unto us their children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is [n]written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. But that he raised him from among the dead, [o]no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken thus, I will give you the [p]faithful mercies* of David; wherefore he saith also in another [psalm], [q]Thou wilt not suffer thy Pious* One to see corruption. For David, having in his own generation served the counsel of God, [r]fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he whom God raised up saw [s]no corruption. Be it [t]known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man is announced to you [u]remission of sins; and from all things from which in

* ὅσια, ὅσιος, the connection cannot be made apparent in English without a paraphrase; but see the Notes.

m ch. 26.6,7. *cf.* Gal.3.16.
n Ps. 2. 7. Heb. 1. 5. Heb. 5. 5.
o cf. Rom.6. 9, 10. *cf.* Heb. 9. 25-28. *cf.* Gen. 24. 5, 6.
p Is. 55. 3. *cf.* Ps. 89. 33 37.
q Ps. 16. 10. ch. 2. 27.
r 1 Ki. 2. 10. *cf.* 2 Sa.7.12.
s ch.2.29-31. *ctr.* Gen. 3. 19.
t vers.32,33. *cf.* ch. 2. 36.
u ch. 5. 31. ch. 10. 43. *cf.* Eph.1.7. *cf.* Heb. 10. 17, 18.

The second psalm does not, however, speak of resurrection; for that the apostle adduces a singular text from Isaiah (chap. lv. 3), "I will give you the sure (or faithful) mercies of David." These mercies, as every one knew, were to be in a Person (as the next verses also show), a Son of David, greater far than he. And of Him the sixteenth psalm, next quoted, plainly speaks. David it is; and yet was it fulfilled in David? Here was a Pious One, who on account of what He was, though His soul would be in hades, would not be suffered to see corruption in the grave. That was not true of David, as they all knew. Of One whom they could not deny to be the Son of David it *was* true. In Him those mercies were deposited in a way which rescued them from peril evermore.

The connection between the "mercies" and the "Pious" One is not seen in English. The words are really the same—and this both in Greek and Hebrew; and some would make them so in English, by translating, "Thy Merciful One;" but I do not take this to be the connection. It is not as being merciful that God could not suffer Him to see corruption: nor for anything that He is towards men. As "Thy Pious One" is undoubtedly a good translation, so it is one that suits the place in which we find it here. But the word used in relation to Jehovah, as in the first case, cannot mean this; we cannot speak of Jehovah's "piety"; and here the alternative rendering as "mercies," "benefits," is evidently right. The word in Hebrew, in its radical meaning, speaks of affection abundant and ready to flow out, whether Godward or manward, and needing therefore to be variously expressed. In the One before us, the true David, or "Beloved," is found the abundant outflow in *both* directions; and here is the connection between the passages as far as this word is concerned. In the Mediator standing between God and man, both God and Man are found in full, ideal relationship. And it is in the Risen Man that this is clearly established, never to be disordered any more.

The effect is now that there is a gospel: "Through this Man is announced to you remission of sins;" and that in a complete way which not only witnesses mercy on God's part, but righteousness,—as justification manifestly does. The wail of the Jobs of ancient time is answered, "How shall man be just with God?" though in a way transcending all ability on man's side; for now God is just, and the Justifier of the ungodly, through faith in Jesus. The justification of a sinner—the righteousness of God put fully upon his side—in the only way in which it could possibly be accomplished, will be the wonder and delight of eternity. What indeed could Moses' law do in such a matter? It was only for sins done inadvertently that it provided (Lev. iv. 2, 13, 22, 27); for any other it

[v] Moses' law ye could not be justified, in him is [w] justified every one who believeth. See then, that there come not upon you that which is spoken in the prophets, Behold, ye [z] despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

4 (xiii.42–52): The Jews rejecting, the apostles turn to the Gentiles.

4. And as they went out, they [y] besought that these things might be spoken to them the next sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the worshiping proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, persuaded them to [z] continue in the grace of God. And on the next sabbath almost all the city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with [a] jealousy, and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, and railed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, saying, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken [b] first to you. Since ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we [c] turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord enjoined us, [d] I have set thee for a light of the nations, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the end of the earth. And the Gentiles hearing [this] were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many

v *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20. *cf.* Rom. 10. 3–11. *cf.* Gal. 3. 10–14. *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19.
w *cf.* Rom. 3. 28. *cf.* Ro. 5. 1. *cf.* Gal. 2. 16.
x Hab. 1. 5. *cf.* Is. 29. 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
y *cf.* Matt. 13. 20, 21.
z *cf.* Col. 1. 23. *cf.* Jude 21. *cf.* Heb. 10. 38, 39.
a *cf.* 1 Thes. 2. 16. *cf.* Matt. 23. 13. *cf.* ch. 22. 21, 22.
b *cf.* Lk. 24. 47. *cf.* Rom. 1. 16.
c *cf.* ch. 28. 26–28. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 4–7.
d Is. 49. 6. *cf.* ch. 15. 16, 17; *cf.* Rom. 11. 25.

was incompetent. And if "without shedding of blood is no remission," "the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins" (Heb. ix. 22, x. 4–7). Of something beyond itself it was ever speaking; yea, of Him whose death for sinners was now an offence everywhere to the Jew.

The apostle adds the warning which the prophet had already given; or rather, God by him; an intimation not to be carried away by the unbelief of their leaders,—an unbelief so plainly foretold. Alas, it was soon to be seen that they needed the warning, and yet that it was to be, except to a remnant, given in vain!*

4. The history of this follows; in which we see the pride of the Jew in his exclusive privileges making him refuse the most precious blessings, if he is to share them with the Gentile. The simple condition of faith which the gospel imposes sets the believing Gentile upon the same footing with the Jew; and on the next sabbath almost the whole city comes together to hear news like this. The sight of the multitudes stirs up the Jews to jealousy, and they contradict Paul with open railing. This in turn rouses the two evangelists to declare their express commission to the Gentiles; and that, since they who had been privileged to have the first invitation of divine grace had put it from them, they would turn to these. And again they produce the undeniable statement of the Word, that Christ was set to be a light to the nations, a salvation even to the end of the earth.

It is, in fact, to One whose labor has been in vain in Israel that God speaks after this manner (Isa. xlix. 4–6). If Israel were not gathered, this even would be a small thing, compared with the work in which He should be glorified, of wide blessing among the Gentiles. This shows it contemplated, at least, that there might be a time when Israel would reject while the Gentiles would receive Him. What serious question would not such a suggestion raise in the mind of

*This address of Paul has something in common with that of Stephen, in that it is a historic summary. It differs from that however, and resembles Peter's at Pentecost, in showing from Scripture the death and resurrection of Christ. S. R.

as were [e]ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was [f]carried abroad through all the country. But the Jews excited the [g]women of the upper classes who were worshipers, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and [h]cast them out from their borders. But they [i]shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were [j]filled with joy and with [the] Holy Spirit.

5 (xiv.1-7): The Strong with the weak.

5. And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the [k]synagogue of the Jews, and [l]so spake that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who were disobedient [m]stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made their minds ill-affected against the brethren. Long time therefore

e *cf.* Rom. 8. 29, 30. *cf.* Jno. 6. 44. *cf.* Rom. 9. 15, 16.
f *cf.* ch. 19. 10.
g *ctr.* ch. 17. 4, 12.
h *cf.* 1 Thes. 2. 15. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2. *cf.* ch. 8. 1.
i Matt. 10. 14. *cf.* ch. 18. 6.
j *cf.* ch. 16. 25. *cf.* Col. 1. 24. *cf.* Matt. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 6.
k ch. 13. 5, 14.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 1-5.

cf. Rom. 15. 19; *cf.* Gal. 3. 1. m ch. 13. 50; ver. 19.

a Jew! And these prophets were read continually in their synagogues! but unbelief gets through the plainest testimonies. The Gentiles are glad, however, and glorify the word of the Lord; and in the sovereign grace of God many believe; and the word of the Lord is carried abroad throughout all the country.

But an opposition is now roused, which follows the apostles through all their labors in these parts. Those who will not themselves receive the truth will not, if they can help it, suffer the truth to be received; and the Jews have influence enough with the Gentiles to turn them against those whom they hate for bringing blessing to the Gentiles! Such is man! So the bringers of good news are cast out for the news they bring; but the disciples are filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

5. The work at Iconium does not present much difference from that at Antioch; only that here a larger number of the Jews believe. The end is similar; the unbelieving Jews stir up the Gentiles, and the apostles have to flee. What is emphasized in the account given is certainly the help found in God, who links Himself to human weakness so as to make it "mighty through God." First, in the synagogue they "*so* spake that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed." Here, spite of its being clearly the work of God to bring men to Himself, yet none the less is He pleased to give effect to the words of His people in such sort that it can be said, they *so* spake as to produce faith. There is a right fitting of words to such an end which must not be overlooked; a skill which only a wisdom begotten of love can enable with, and which disdains not diligence for the attainment of its ends,—"And because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he pondered and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly, even words of truth" (Eccl. xii. 9, 10).

There are many who seem to think that the teaching of the Spirit of God should set aside all this. They speak slightingly of the "study" even of the word of God. They no longer "cry after knowledge," nor "lift up the voice for understanding;" they do not "seek her as silver," nor "search for her as for hid treasures." Yet they doubt not to "understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 3–5). Without sowing of seed, they expect harvests, and that negligence now shall do the work of diligence, and find the blessing it has never sought.

But the man of God is to be furnished unto all good works; and from Scripture only is this furnishing. If we are to be "as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word," *how much* does a new-born babe desire milk? Alas! the careless way in which the word of God is read to-day shows little of the

they tarried, speaking [n]boldly in dependence on the Lord, who bare [o]witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was [p]divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when an effort was made, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them ill, and stone them, they became aware of it, and [q]fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, to Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding country; and there they evangelized.

6 (xiv.8-20): Touching the boundaries.

6. And there sat a certain man in Lystra, [r]impotent in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never

n *cf.* ch. 4.29, 31. *cf.* ch.28.31. *cf.* Rom.1.16.
o *cf.* Mk. 16.20. *cf.* ch. 5. 32 with ch.10. 44-47.
p *cf.* ch. 17. 4-8.
q Matt. 10. 23. *cf.* Matt.12. 15.
r *cf.* ch.9. 25.
cf. ch.3. 2-8.

teaching of the Spirit of God; and thus with each new wind of doctrine, the anchors of so many drag at once!

Here we are speaking rather of the ability to affect others; and for this the need of gift from God must not be forgotten. But the possession of whatever gift does not render one superior to the rules which are common to all Christians, and which are plain moral rules, every one. The *servant serves with what the Christian has acquired;* and this is a most important rule indeed! We acquire and prove in our own souls what we can then use for the souls of others; and the very fact that we are to serve others with it shows the need all have of it, and not servants only. There is no part of the word of God that is not intended for all the people of God; and we all learn as learners, not as teachers. Oh for the longing from the heart of every Christian for that which has all come from the heart of God for all His own!

Those *so* speak as to make men believe, who have themselves received with a living and joyous faith what they impart to others: and who impart it therefore, not according to the rules of an artificial pedagogy, but from such full hearts as alone can reach hearts.

So the apostles spake, and so the Iconians believed. But all the more it stirred the souls of some to faith, the more would it awaken opposition in the hearts of its rejectors. Again it was the Jews who evil affected the Gentiles towards the brethren, newly become such. Here too, however, the weak are with the Strong, who protects them and enables them to continue in the midst of the opposition, by means, perhaps, of the signs and wonders which He grants them to do, and of which at Antioch we hear nothing. They seem by no means, therefore, a necessary accompaniment of the gospel, but rather an occasional help,—in this case, seemingly, to quiet opposition, and make men realize with whom they had to do.

The city was divided; but at last a determined attack was to be made,—a combined attempt to stone them on the part of Jews and Gentiles both. Acting then upon the Lord's words to the disciples, they flee to Lystra and Derbe, in the wilder parts of Lycaonia, and there pursue their work.

6. As at Iconium there was seen the power of Him who was with His word, so now at Lystra is demonstrated the fickleness of the multitude, who presently stone the man whom at first they would have worshiped as a god. The healing of the impotent man suggests the latter; yet is all incompetent to commend to the mass the blessed truth brought to them by the healer, which should have been its own commendation; while the tale of his traducers finds its way to the very bottom of their hearts! Both ways one touches boundaries here, but finds good nowhere. Men will idolize you, perhaps; for God has lost His place with them, and it is easily given to another. They will destroy their idol too, as easily. This is the creature, man, to whom nevertheless God has sent a message of infinite grace, the story of a work more wonderful than ever blessed before the ears that hear it; but over this he has the greatest difficulty! What

walked. This man heard Paul speaking; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had [s]faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright upon thy feet; and he [t]leaped up and [u]walked. And the multitudes, seeing what Paul had done, lifted up their voices, saying in the Lycaonian [tongue], The [v]gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because he took the [w]lead in speaking. And the priest of Jupiter, who was before the city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates, and would have done [x]sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of [y]like passions with you, and bring you glad tidings, that ye should [z]turn from these vain things unto the living God, who [a]made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in the past generations [b]suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without [c]witness, in that he did good and gave you rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these words they scarcely restrained the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

But there came Jews from Antioch and Iconium; and, having [d]persuaded the multitudes, they [e]stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But while the disciples surrounded him, he stood up, and [f]entered into the city; and on the morrow he [g]went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

7 (xiv.21-28): The completion of the work.

7. And when they had evangelized that city, and made many disciples, they [h]returned to Lystra, and Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to [i]continue in the faith, and that through

s *cf.* Matt. 9. 2, 28, 29.
t *cf.* Is. 35. 6. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23.
u *cf.* 1 Thes. 2. 12 with Is. 40. 31. *ctr.* Gal. 5. 7.
v *cf.* ch. 8. 10. *cf.* ch. 28. 6. *cf.* ch. 12. 22.
w ch. 13. 13, 16.
x *cf.* ch. 10. 25, 26. *cf.* Dan. 2. 46 *ctr.* ver. 19.
y *cf.* Jas. 5. 17. *cf.* Rev. 19. 10.
z *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9. *cf.* ch. 15. 19. *cf.* Gal. 4. 8-11.
a *cf.* ch. 4. 24. *cf.* ch. 17. 24. *cf.* Col. 1. 16.
b *cf.* ch. 17. 30. *cf.* Gen. 15. 16. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9, 10.
c *cf.* Rom. 1. 20, 21. *cf.* Matt. 5. 45. *cf.* Ps. 65. 8-13.
d ch. 13. 50. *cf.* Mk. 15. 11.
e *cf.* ch. 7. 58. *cf.* ch. 9. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 25.
f *cf.* Jno. 11. 7-10. *cf.* ch. 20. 24.
g *cf.* ver. 6.
h *cf.* ch. 15. 36.
i ch. 13. 43. *cf.* ch. 2. 42.

but the power of the Spirit could one trust to make way for the gospel in a world like this?

Preserved from it at Iconium, Paul is permitted to be stoned at Lystra; how, amid it all, his mind must have gone back to Stephen! but that he should abide in the flesh was needful yet for many; and this, and not the wills of lawless men, governs all: while the disciples stand round him, he rises up, and returns into the city. "Fear would have said, Go anywhere else just now. Self would have said, Stay there, and see what a future triumph for the gospel! But the thoughts of man are in neither suggestion the mind of Christ; and this the apostle had and acted on." (W. Kelly.) "On the morrow he went away with Barnabas to Derbe."

7. The limit of their journey at the present time is now reached. At Derbe there are many disciples made, with no record of after-persecution; and thence they return to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." Such words for the mass seem idle now, though assuredly they should still have meaning. The lives of the speakers were in this case an illustration in full of what they declared, and it was

many [j]tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And having chosen them [k]elders in each assembly, having [l]prayed, with fastings, they [m]commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. And having passed through Pisidia, they came unto Pamphylia; and having spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, whence they had been [n]committed to the grace of God, for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they had come, and gathered together the assembly, they [o]related to them all that God had done with them, and how he had [p]opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples.

j *cf.* Rom 5 3. *cf.* Phil. 1 29. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4 12, 13.
k *cf.* ch. 11. 30. *cf.* ch. 20. 17 *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 1, etc. *cf.* Tit. 1. 5 9.
l *cf.* ch. 13. 3.
m ch. 20. 32.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 2–4.
o ch. 15. 3, 4, 12. ch. 21. 19.
p *cf.* ch. 11 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 9

not possible for any to dissent from a principle so manifest as these had made it.

Now for the first time we come to the appointment of elders in the assemblies; a class of officers of which we have heard hitherto only among the assemblies in Judea. Unless age and experience are to count for nothing in the affairs of the assembly, an eldership must naturally obtain recognition everywhere, practically if not formally; and in the Jewish assemblies it seems to have been simply a natural growth (1 Pet. v. 1, 5), officialized by antique and patriarchal custom. Yet all would not be ready to take their part in the responsibilities implied, and many would become in different ways disqualified. The eldership would thus become more restricted than the term properly would argue for.

In the assembly also, in contradistinction from Judaism, all terms had a spiritual significance. The "babes, young men, and fathers" were spiritual grades primarily; even though by no means wholly severed from their natural representatives. Years would count, and yet not simply as time and nothing else. That would be true even in nature, that men might be older or younger than their age; but spiritually much greater and more significant would such disproportion be. Thus there would be disqualifications for eldership, and mainly moral, though not wholly. If any one examines the apostle's qualifications of an overseer (which was the official status of the elder), as given in the first epistle to Timothy, he will easily discern the moral character on which all is based, and that it is that of the "father" (chap. iii. 1–7; comp. v. 1). A specific gift was quite another matter; and though it might and should develop, no age or experience could communicate it. But it was just the experience of one spiritually a "father" which would enable him for oversight in the family of God.

In the case of the assemblies here, the apostles choose elders for them; they are not able, therefore, to do it for themselves: and this is confirmed by the express commission given to Titus to appoint elders in those of Crete, as by the directions as to them given to Timothy; where the fact of his being at Ephesus, where there were already such (chap. xx. 17) makes their inability to appoint also as evident as that of the assembly. It was an office which apparently any might desire, and to which, therefore, one would say, all who had the needful qualifications might be appointed. The appointment conveyed an authority which the exercise of special gift did not require; that of the preacher or teacher being simply that of the word he ministered, and not of office.

Things being thus set in order in these young assemblies, with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had believed; and passing back along the road by which they had come, having reached the sea-coast, sailed to Antioch. There they had been committed to the grace of God for the work now fulfilled; and there they related how God through them had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. There they remained no little time.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xv. 1–35.)

Is the Law to be added to the Gospel?

1 (1-6): The occasion of the question.

1. AND certain persons who had come down from [q] Judea taught the brethren, Except ye shall have been circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. A commotion therefore having taken place, and no little [r] debate with them by Paul and Barnabas, they arranged that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of them should go up to [s] Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, having been brought on their way by the assembly, [t] passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and caused great [u] joy to all the brethren. And being arrived at Jerusalem, they were [v] received by the assembly and the apostles

q cf. Gal. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 10. 45.

r ver. 7. *cf.* Gal. 2. 1-10. *cf.* Gal. 5. 2-12. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12-16.

s cf. ch. 11. 2. *cf.* ver. 1.

t cf. ch. 14. 27.

u cf. ch. 11. 18, 23.

v cf. ch. 21. 17.

SUBD. 2.

We have already seen abundantly, and as emphasized in the Cross itself, that it is the men of law who are to be the special opponents of the way of grace. That which God gave for the cure of self-righteousness is that which the perversity of man uses in the interest of it. And this we are to find both outside and inside Christianity, adapting itself in various grades and modifications to what is its mere opposite; as a parasitic growth twines itself round and sustains itself upon that from which it draws the nutritive juices which are its life.

The law was given for the cure of legality; but its mode of dealing with this (perhaps the only, and thus the absolutely necessary way) being that of experiment, it seems at first sight, and on a superficial view, to favor it. God gave the law, say men, and think they need go no further. Would He say, "Do this," without meaning that you are to do it? That its real purpose should be to stop every one's mouth, and bring all the world in guilty before God,—that is an intolerable thought. And when, convicted and undone, we must needs cast ourselves upon Christ entirely for the righteousness which in ourselves we cannot find, still, for most of us, if not all, the same weary round must be pursued in the interests of holiness and practical life; conscience goading us on a road which to the most conscientious is most impracticable, until we break down with the despairing groan, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" The least conscientious get on best here; and they find provided for them all along the road certain helps for travelers—mere evasions of the truth, or opiates for the conscience—which enable them to tread it with apparent ease, or lead them off unwittingly upon a convenient bye-path. With these inventions we have not as yet to do; we are here at the beginning of the history of Christianity, and things meet us in their first and simplest forms. Here therefore, those of the sect of the Pharisees who believe have only in a straightforward manner to declare that it is needful to circumcise the Gentile converts, and to enjoin them to keep the law of Moses. And by this they mean, not certain moral essentials, but the law as a whole: what a Jew would call that. This question—already settled as it might seem, and indeed really was—comes up nevertheless again for settlement. It cannot be suffered to be decided in default merely of advocates for Moses; it must be taken up distinctly, raised and argued out; and this is accordingly what we find now.

1. Those who are the occasion of the question being raised do not themselves make a question of it. They preach boldly and without a doubt their legal doctrine, as is usual with men of their class. "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." It need not, one would think, have raised much alarm; for they could quote neither scripture nor apostle for it; but

and the elders, and they [w]announced to them how great things God had done with them. And there rose up some of the [z]sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and enjoin them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and the [y]elders were gathered together to see about this matter.

2 (7-21): The witness of God.

2. And when there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said unto them, Brethren, ye [z]know how, long ago, God made choice among you, that by my mouth

w ch. 14. 27. ver. 12.

x ver. 1. *cf.* ch. 26.5. *cf.* ch. 23. 6.

y *cf.* vers. 2, 4, 22. *cf.* ch. 14.23. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5.1.

z *cf.* chs. 10, 11. 1-18.

the sheep of Christ are, alas, a timid folk, and a loud voice and a confident tone are apt to dismay, if not to carry them. A commotion thus is easily excited, which even Paul and Barnabas are unable to put an end to. Behind these persons from Judea looms the shadow of Jerusalem and the twelve, the primal seat of authority; and in fact it is of God that this matter shall be settled there, so that there may be no possibility of cavil any more. Jerusalem is to be the place of settlement, just because the Jewish yoke is to be finally and for ever taken off the necks of the Gentiles, and no other hands could do it so well. It is an act of abdication of supposed rights that is to be accomplished, and those must do this who are thought to have the rights. After all, the decision really is that *God* has settled the matter, and that they have nothing to do but to bow to what He has done.

It is in a very different interest that this first "council" is quoted and appealed to, namely to give sanction to a hierarchical government of the Church. The patriarchate of Jerusalem is thus made to have its beginning from the earliest times, with James as its head and oracle giving sentence, even in the presence of the whole conclave of the apostles themselves! A small foundation indeed, upon which to build the immense system that has been built upon it. The moral suitability of all here is as plain as the *un*suitability for the purposes of ecclesiastical pretension which it is made to serve. And this will be more evident as we proceed to consider it.

The discordant voices that have been heard have come from Judea. There is the seat of what may be a growing and fatal heresy. The place for it to be met is there where it has had its origin, and with the full agreement of those who are leaders in the Jewish assemblies. Paul and Barnabas, with others from Antioch, it is arranged, shall go up there; and the assembly, in testimony of their fellowship with them, conduct them on the way. Everywhere, as they pass through Phenicia and Samaria, they carry with them the news of the Gentile work now fairly beginning, and of the wonderful power of God which has shown itself in this: a fitting introduction to bring hearts into accord with Him in the grace He has already manifested, and to make them fear to cloud it by the bringing in of a principle so contradictory to that first free action of the Spirit as that which men would now fain introduce.

So they come to Jerusalem, and in full assembly, before the apostles and elders, announce the same joyful news of the blessing that has been given,—the first-fruits of a great harvest to come in. *God* has wrought; will they dictate to Him the terms of continuance of that which without condition He has so begun? Here the Pharisees among the disciples echo the voice which has been heard at Antioch, and in the same positive way. We cannot be saved *by* the law, indeed, but can we be saved *without* the law?—a question existing to-day, apart from the crude form in which it is uttered here; and urged with the same heedlessness of the answer of God already fully given, as well as of the imperative needs that lie hid in their souls who ask it.

2. It is noticeable that not the apostles only come to consider the matter. Those set in the place of founders of Christianity—Christ's special gifts to the Church for that purpose—do not assume on that account to sit in a conclave of their own, and simply let others know the decision they have arrived at. Just

the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who [a]knoweth the heart, bare them witness, [b]giving them the Holy Spirit, even as to us, and put [c]no difference between us and them, [d]cleansing their hearts by faith. Now then, why [e]tempt ye God, in putting a [f]yoke upon the disciples' necks, which [g]neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the [h]grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved in the same manner as they. And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul [i]relating how great signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles by their means.

a *cf.* Jno. 2. 24, 25. *cf.* ch. 1. 24. *cf.* Rom. 8. 27. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19.
b *cf.* ch. 10. 44–47. *cf.* Gal. 3. 2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
c *cf.* Rom. 3. 22–24, 29, 30. *cf.* Rom. 10. 12. *cf.* Eph. 2 11–22. *cf.* Col. 3. 10,
11. *d cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 11; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 22; *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 9; *cf.* Ps. 51. 10. *e cf.* Heb. 3. 9, 10. *f* ver. 28. *cf.* Gal. 5. 1; *cf.* Gal. 4. 8–11; *cf.* Col. 2. 16–23. *g cf.* Matt. 23. 4; *cf.* Gal. 3. 19, 23, 24; *ctr.* Matt. 11. 28–30; *ctr.* 1 Jno. 5. 3. *h cf.* Rom. 11. 6; *cf.* Eph. 2. 8, 9; *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. *i* vers. 3, 4.

so much the more as the Lord has endowed them with special gift, so much the less need have they to fence themselves round with the claim of authority which after all is found in the word they bring, and must have its confirmation in the conscience and heart of those that listen to it. Those whose history we have before us here are evidently men who believe in full light and fresh air,—who allow discussion, and appeal themselves both to Scripture and reason. Reason is not a revelation, and must be subject to revelation; but which will enlighten, not contradict it. The more they were persuaded of the truth they had being indeed from God, the more freely could they take the ground of one of these apostles, "I speak as to wise men,"—sensible men, as we speak commonly—"judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. x. 15). The cry against the mind so often made by assumed spirituality is most contrary to God, who has made us altogether for Himself, and claims us altogether. Mind is not a product of the fall, though the fall has darkened and enfeebled it. We need God here as everywhere, to deliver from the power of sin which has enslaved naturally all our faculties; but a man without mind is simply an idiot, and the lack is one which no spiritual work that one ever hears of provides substitute for. Mind is a gift of creation, not of new creation. The new-creative work is spiritual, and not mental, however much the whole man is enlarged and blessed by it.

The naturalness of all here is refreshing. Debate goes on freely with the apostles in presence; the arguments of the law-advocates are allowed to have full hearing, although they are not recorded for us. At last Peter stands up and narrates the story we have listened to before, of how God had settled this matter a good while since, when by his mouth the Gentiles first heard the gospel and believed. God had testified in their behalf, putting the seal of His Spirit on them though uncircumcised, purifying them not by circumcision but by faith. Had He then spoken anything of any supplementary work to be effected in them by Moses? And what did their own experience tell them of the yoke of the law? Would they put that upon these fresh disciples, which they and their fathers too had found no ability to bear? It would be tempting God, not pleasing Him to impose that upon them which He in His ways had conspicuously left aside. And they themselves trusted for salvation, not to legal righteousness, but to the grace of the Lord Jesus.

The clear and sufficient argument goes further than they yet were able or disposed to carry it. Was God indeed freeing the Gentiles' necks from such an intolerable yoke, still to leave the Jewish believers under it? But they keep to the point in hand: God had certainly spoken with sufficient plainness as to it, and the silence following testifies to the effect produced. To have resisted would have been resisting Him. They are silent therefore, while Barnabas and Paul—we see how naturally here at Jerusalem Barnabas, best and longest known, returns to his old precedence—once more relate the signs and wonders with which it had pleased God to confirm their work among the nations. It was in fact

And after they had held their peace, [j]James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken to me: Simon* hath related how God first visited the Gentiles, to [k]take out from them a people for his Name. And to this [l]agree the words of the prophets, as it is [m]written, After these things I will return, and [n]build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen: yea, I will build again the ruins of it, and set it up, so that the [o]residue of men may seek out the Lord, even all the nations upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth these things [p]known from eternity.† Wherefore *I* judge that we

*Symeon. †MSS. vary as to the exact words; but the meaning is little changed.

j ch. 12. 17. ch. 21. 18. *cf.* Gal. 1. 19. *cf.* Gal. 2. 9, 12.
k *cf.* ch. 13. 48. *cf.* Rom. 15. 9–12.
l *cf.* ch. 2. 16.
m Am. 9. 11, 12.
n *cf.* Hag. 2. 9.
o *cf.* ch. 17. 26, 27. *cf.* Is. 49. 1, 6.
p *cf.* Is. 45. 21, 22. *cf.* Gal. 3. 8.

Peter's argument extended and amplified; and thus God had been bearing witness to what was in His heart: who should gainsay Him? It was a different—a strange work compared with anything that the law could show, the heart of God breaking through all barriers with its message of divine reconciliation and peace for all;—God the God of all His creatures once again; sin and its estrangements overcome for all who would have it so!

This story of grace ended, James adds a final word; not, surely, as president of the conference, any more than Patriarch of Jerusalem, but as led of the Spirit, who has the controlling place all through, and therefore just the most suitable person to show the complete harmony that prevailed. It is, no doubt, as commonly understood, not James the apostle, the son of Alphæus, but James the brother of Jude, the writer of the epistle which we have under his name. Everything that we know of him shows him to have been himself one of the most zealous of the law, which indeed all the thousands of believing Jews could a good while afterwards still be claimed to be (chap. xxi. 20). If James gives his judgment in agreement with Peter, then there is really no more to be said. In that sense his judgment is final; but Peter's had already settled all. Rather, it was God who had done so; and James continues but his argument by an appeal to Scripture to show that the blessing of the Gentiles as Gentiles had been before announced by God Himself. For this purpose, while he refers generally to the prophets he is content to quote Amos (chap. ix. 11, 12), in proof that there would be nations upon whom God's Name would be called. He does not at all say that the fulfilment of this was now taking place, or therefore, that the tabernacle of David was now being raised up. It is sufficient for him that such a thing as Gentiles being owned as God's was in full accord with God's ways announced. The prophecy clearly looks on to millennial times, and not to Christian; but that which God can do at one time cannot be *in itself* inconsistent for Him to do at another.*

James concludes that those are not to be troubled who from the nations are turning to God. Whoever desires to know the law can hear it every sabbath in the synagogues. Let them only abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. And to this the whole assembly agree without further discussion.

We have no difficulty as to the first two things specified here. The last two are connected together, and go back beyond Moses to God's covenant with Noah and his posterity,—therefore are not simply Jewish, though incorporated in the Jewish law, but apply to the whole present race of men. "The blood is the

*The quotation here of the Septuagint version, where it so decidedly differs from the Hebrew, cannot but impress one. James does not seem the man to favor Hellenism, and the whole character of the proceedings shows the manifest guidance of the Spirit of God A very slight change of the Hebrew letters would reproduce the text which the Alexandrian translators must have had before them. The meaning thus obtained seems also better than that of the present text.

should not [q]trouble those who from the Gentiles are turning unto God; but that we write unto them that they abstain from [r]pollutions of idols, and from [s]fornication, and from that which is [t]strangled, and from [u]blood. For Moses, from generations of old, hath in every city those who preach him, being read in the [v]synagogues every sabbath.

3 (22-35): The publication.

3. Then pleased it the [w]apostles and the elders, with the whole assembly, to send men chosen from among them, unto Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas,—Judas, who

q ver. 10. *cf.* Rom. 7. 22-24. *cf.*Gal.6.17.
r ver. 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. *cf.*1 Cor.10. 19–22. *cf.* Rev. 2. 14.
*s cf.*1 Cor. 5. 1, 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 2, etc. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 3 8.
*t cf.*Gen.9.4; *cf.*Lev.22.8. *u cf.*Lev.17.14. *v cf.*ch.13.15; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 15. *w* ver.28; *cf.*Matt.18.20.

life," and life belongs to God: the recognition of this in so open a way as is here enjoined is surely seemly; and in a world of strife and bloodshed such as sin has made this,—where, too, the creatures subjected to man are in danger of ruthless extirpation at his hands, not even limited by his own interest in their preservation, is (or would be, if it were maintained) every way for good. Man has, of course, set it aside, and the world at large has forgotten it; but the good of that which is from God abides, and this it is the duty and privilege of the Church to maintain,—the rights of the Creator, as well as the grace of the Redeemer. Another has said with regard to this decree:—

"It is a direction which teaches, not that which is abstractly good or evil, but that which was suitable to the case presented. It was 'necessary,' not 'righteous before God', to avoid certain things. The things might be really evil, but they are not here looked at in that way. There were certain things to which the Gentiles were accustomed, which it was proper they should renounce, in order that the assembly might walk as it ought before God in peace. To the other ordinances of the law they were not to be subjected. Moses had those who preached him. That sufficed, without compelling the Gentiles to submit to his laws, when they joined themselves, not to the Jews, but to the Lord.

"This decree therefore does not pronounce upon the nature of the things forbidden, but upon the opportuneness—the Gentiles having in fact been in the habit of doing all these things. We must observe that they were not things forbidden by the law only. It was that which was contrary to the order established by God as Creator, or to a prohibition given to Noah when he was told to eat flesh. Woman was only to be connected with man in the sanctity of marriage, and this is a very great blessing. Life belonged to God. All fellowship with idols was an outrage against the authority of the true God. Let Moses teach his own laws; these things were contrary to the intelligent knowledge of the true God. It is not therefore a new law imposed by Christianity, nor an accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews. It has not the same kind of validity as a moral ordinance that is obligatory in itself. It is the expression to Christian intelligence of the terms of man's true relations with God in the things of nature, given by the goodness of God, through the leaders at Jerusalem, to ignorant Christians setting them free from the law, and enlightening them with regard to the relations between God and man, and to that which was proper to man,—things of which, as idolatrous Gentiles, they had been ignorant. I have said, *addressed to Christian intelligence:* accordingly there is nothing inconsistent in eating anything that is sold at the shambles; for I acknowledge God who gave it, and not an idol. But if the act implies communion with the idol, even to the conscience of another, it would be provoking God to jealousy; I sin against Him or against my neighbor. I do not know whether an animal is strangled or not, but if people act so as to imply that it is indifferent whether life belongs to God or not, I sin again; I am not defiled by the thing, but I fail in Christian intelligence with regard to the rights of God as Creator." (*Synopsis.*)

3. For the publication of the decree, the assembly choose out men from among them to send back as their representatives with Paul and Barnabas to

is called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren; and they [x] wrote thus by them: The apostles and elder brethren,* to the brethren from among the Gentiles at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that [y] some who went out from among us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, [saying that ye must be circumcised and keep the law,]† to whom we gave no commandment, it seemed good unto us, having come to a common mind,‡ to send [z] chosen men to you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,—men who have [a] given up their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the [b] same things by word [of mouth]. For it [c] seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no [d] burden more than these [e] necessary things, to abstain from idol-sacrifices, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornications; from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well. Farewell. They therefore, being let go, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude, delivered the epistle. And

x ch. 16. 4.

y vers. 1, 5. cf. Gal. 2. 12, 13.

z ver. 22. cf. ch. 13. 2.

a cf. ch. 14. 19, etc. cf. ch. 20. 24.

b cf. 2 Cor. 13. 1.

c ver. 22. cf. 1 Cor. 2 14-16. cf. ch. 16. 6, 7.

d cf. ver. 10. cf. Gal. 5. 10.

e ver. 20.

* Or, "elders and brethren." † Many omit the bracketed portion.
‡ Or, "being assembled with one accord."

Antioch, to confirm all by word of mouth that they were writing, that no suspicion should by any possibility arise; expressing also in their letter, in strong terms their thorough confidence in those who had been the leaders in this work among the Gentiles. It is striking that in the letter the "elder brethren" (which is generally accepted now as the true reading) are associated with the apostles. It confirms what has been already said as to the character of eldership in the Jewish assemblies, while showing how little jealous as to their prerogatives as such were the genuine apostles. The place they had, and which was given them by the Lord, the Spirit of God maintained in the spiritual power which was theirs—the gift which they used to serve with. In seven out of fourteen of Paul's epistles we find a similar association of others with himself; and such style is truly apostolic. The men of those days were yet in remembrance of the Lord's pattern of greatness being a little child, and that He Himself had been among them as one that serveth.

When they say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us," it has to be remembered that the Spirit coming upon Cornelius and his company was indeed to Peter and to those with him the incontrovertible proof of God's acceptance of men uncircumcised; and that thus we can easily see why they should speak of the Spirit first and apart from themselves. The same seal had everywhere been put upon the Gentile converts; how then could they do otherwise than obediently follow as the Spirit so manifestly led? Their decision had been called for: they declare themselves therefore, as they could not do otherwise, in obedient harmony with what the Spirit Himself, apart from them, had done. The witness of the prophets, to which James had appealed, was also His witness; and the command given to Noah was of course no new enactment, but what Scripture had handed down. Really there was the fullest reason, therefore, for the language which they use, which separates what the Spirit Himself had led in from their own following as thus led of Him.

Nor is it in the least probable that they would have thought it necessary in announcing a decision of this character, to assure men that they were acting by the Spirit in such terms as they use here. That they *had* the Spirit, no one questioned; their actual *guidance* would not be better proved by the assertion, if

when they had read it, they [f]rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being [g]prophets also themselves, comforted the brethren with much discourse, and established them. And having tarried awhile, they were let go in peace from the brethren to those who sent them. [But it seemed good to Silas to abide there.*] But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, [h]teaching and announcing the glad tidings of the word of the Lord, with many others also.

f ch. 11. 23
g cf. ch. 13 1 cf. 1 Cor. 14 1–
h cf. ch. 11. 26.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xv. 36–xx. 38.)

Transformations: the moral result.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. xv. 36–xvi. 12.)

The fundamental principle the sovereign will of God.

1 (xv. 36–41): Faithfulness.

1. BUT after some days Paul [t]said to Barnabas, Let us [j]return now, and visit the brethren in every city in which we have announced the word of the Lord, [and see] how they go on. And Barnabas advised that they should take with them also [k]John, called Mark. But Paul thought it not fit to take with them him who had fallen off from them from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. A very [l]warm feeling

t ctr. ch. 13. 2.
j cf. ch. 14. 21–23.
k ch. 12. 12, 25. ch. 13. 5, 13. cf. Col. 4. 10. cf. 2 Tim. 4. 11.
l cf. Gen. 13. 7, 8. cf. 1 Cor. 11. 19.

*The majority of MSS omit the verse in brackets, but verse 40 would seem to show Silas had remained, or returned again.

any were disposed to question that. The apostle Paul does indeed, on one occasion, when he had been giving a judgment as to what it would be happier for one to do, remind us that he had the Spirit of God (1 Cor. vii. 40). But that is just because he is not speaking authoritatively, but simply tendering advice. He is not, as it were, in this case, the *apostle*, but the *man;* and we might need to be reminded that he was yet a man endowed (in how singular a way) with the Spirit of God. But what is before us now is a very different thing from this; and the authority of their decree would not be enhanced by a claim which the fact of its emanation from the apostles of the Lord and Saviour rendered quite unnecessary. On the other hand it would not be out of place to point out, against those who were troubling that the Spirit had already decided the whole matter. The case of Cornelius could not be unknown to them; in which the lack of circumcision had been definitely a question, and at Jerusalem itself. They had been taking up again what had been before sufficiently threshed out. In fact it was the enemy's work, however overruled of God for blessing; and in other and more subtle forms was to be again and again renewed.

For such need as all this implied, the testimony of Judas and Silas, prophets themselves, would be all-important; and thus in fact we hear of the comforting and establishment of the brethren by their means. Peace and unity were perfectly preserved; and as yet the adversary had gained no advantage. It is noted that, after they had tarried awhile, they are "let go in peace" to those who sent them; while the word of the Lord makes progress still in Antioch, and the number increases of those who labor in it.

SUBD. 3.

The part of the Acts to which we have now come, and which seems to include all the remaining labors of Paul, in Europe and in Asia, until his last journey to Jerusalem, where the malice of the Jews delivers him, after the pattern of his blessed Master, into the hands of the Gentiles, is from its largeness and variety hard to characterize. It can hardly be doubted, however, to give the moral result of the publication of the gospel in the Gentile world. The record

arose therefore [between them], so that they separated from one another, and Barnabas taking Mark sailed to [m]Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and went forth, being [n]commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.* And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, [o]confirming the assemblies.

* Or, "of God." MSS. differ.

m cf. ch. 4. 36. *cf.* ch. 13. 4.
n cf. ch. 13. 3 with ch. 15. 26.
o ch. 16. 5. *cf.* Rom. 1. 11.

presents carefully selected types of its working in the midst of a people far enough away from God to worship in Athens one unknown, and in Ephesus to have it slander to assert that "they are no gods that are made with hands." Where God is thus lost the whole anchorage of the soul is lost, and all things must be in drift; but it is hard for us to realize how openly evil stalked abroad in the old heathen world. The remedy provided by the gospel was no superficial one, but met the condition in what was its source, by the revelation of God in Christ, and the establishment of abiding relationship in peace between Him and all who in faith received the word of reconciliation.

Sec. 1.

The character of the message is seen in the messenger, as Paul elsewhere urges. A yea and nay preacher would not commend his preaching as a trustworthy "yea." (2 Cor. i. 17–19.) A man himself insubject could not expect to lead others into subjection to God. And this is what we start with here in him who is the pattern worker set before us in the scenes in which we are now to accompany him. For him to live was Christ; and that means obedience absolute: that God must be God was his fundamental principle; and this gave him, not freedom from exercise, but assurance as to a path which he could walk in in faith as God's path—the only thing that can give ability for it. Christ as his Lord alone, the Spirit was for him, as for all others then, sole Guide and Interpreter of his Lord's will. His conscience was before God and not man, as a right conscience ever must be. Nothing is more plainly seen here than the positive way in which the Spirit guided, often in opposition to the human wisdom and will of the apostle himself. Being forbidden to speak the Word in Asia, they attempt to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffers them not. Then follows the vision of the man of Macedonia, and they pass over into Europe. Guidance is by no means in any uniform way; one needs to be on the alert, as well as instructed in the Lord's mind. Guidance with the eye requires the eye to be in waiting for the look that is to guide; and so Elijah stood before the Lord his God.

1. In the first place we do not hear of any direct word. It is the heart that prompts Paul to think of the brethren in the various places in which he had preached the gospel, with solicitude to know how they have been faring since. He proposes therefore to Barnabas that they should visit them together. Love is the true motive principle, and (where it is divine love) is clear-sighted too. The trouble as to guidance here is to avoid mixtures and counterfeits. That Barnabas should be ready seems a matter of course; but he proposes to take Mark with them, who had failed them on the former occasion, and at the very entrance upon what was the real work. Here was love too, no doubt, but as to his sister's son, too purely human. Paul being unwilling, there arises a very warm feeling between them, which separates the two so closely attached hitherto. Barnabas, kindly man as he is, now ruffled in his affections which doubtless are mingled with gracious desire that the young man may recover himself, seems to manifest most (as just such kindly spirits, so touched, are apt to do) the impatience which hurries him off with his nephew to his native land; and we lose him from the history. Paul, choosing Silas for his companion, goes forth, commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. Barnabas had failed also, just before this, as we learn from Galatians, following Peter's example upon the

2 (xvi.1-5): Wisdom.

2. And he came also to Derbe and Lystra; and behold, a certain disciple was there, by name Timotheus, the son of a [p]Jewish woman who believed, but the father a Greek, who was borne [q]witness of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, and took and [r]circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they journeyed through the cities, they delivered them for their observance the [s]decrees determined on by the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. The assemblies therefore were confirmed in the faith, and increased in number daily.

p *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 5. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 15. *cf.* Eph. 6. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 14.
q *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 7. *cf.* 3 Jno. 12.
r *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20. *ctr.* Gal. 2. 3. *cf.* Gal. 5. 6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15.
s ch. 15. 22–29.
t ch. 2. 47. ch. 9. 31.

Jewish question; and this would naturally add to the seriousness of the matter in Paul's eyes. Certainly with him it was faithfulness that cost much which could make him stand against the endeared companion of days so happily remembered, and against the solicitations of a heart that knew if any did, the mercy of God towards the weak and erring, but now must be strong in the interests of grace itself to keep it free from all that would hinder its proper testimony among men. To Mark, at a later day, he gladly bears testimony; and he, the failing servant, is privileged, as we know, to give us the story of the Unfailing, Perfect One. Would he not in that after-time be the first to justify the apparent harshness which was only truth to Christ before all else, of the apostle now? And this is true love also, that seeketh not her own, but can be faithful because it *is* love.

2. But love gives wisdom also; and fullest obedience to Christ will go farthest in all that is permissible to yield to bring men to Him. At Jerusalem the circumcision of the Gentiles had been resisted to the uttermost, and on his new journey into Asia Minor Paul carried with him and delivered to the assemblies the decrees which had distinctly freed them from any imposition of the yoke of the law; yet at Lystra he himself circumcises Timothy, the child of a Jewess and a Greek; and this is for some an inconsistency sufficient to discredit the whole narrative. In fact, it is doubted, however, whether such a step was legally right at all; though if it were not, it is hard to see how it would have conciliated the unconverted Jews, and not rather have been an additional offence to them. The apostle certainly knew well the people he was dealing with, none better; and that would settle the legality of it, in their minds at least. As for his own use of the Jewish rite, he uses it, as is plain in the fullest Christian liberty, which is always liberty to give up one's privileges wherever the love that constrains us to seek souls for Christ shall be better served by it. He expresses elsewhere carefully the principle that guides him here: "to those that are under the law, as under the law, *not being myself under law*, that I might gain those that are under the law" (1 Cor. ix. 20). Here is the motive of his act in this case, with the assertion at the same time of his own freedom from the law while acting so. It is the wisdom that wins souls that he displays in it. Of Timothy we shall hear much elsewhere. At present we know him only as one to whom witness is borne by the brethren, and whom Paul takes with him as companion and assistant on his journey now. He answers to his name all through, as "one who honors God"; and even the two epistles to him which are preserved to us are in striking accord with this. It is to Timothy that Paul in his very last epistle pours out his whole heart.

The company of travelers thus increased carry with them the decrees determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; and these have happy effect in confirming the assemblies in the faith, and adding to their number. Grace it is that establishes the soul and wins the heart to God.

3 (6-12): The Spirit and the vision.

3. And they went through the region of Phrygia and [u]Galatia, having been [v]forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, and having come down to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, and the [w]Spirit of Jesus* suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a [z]vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying, [y]Come over into Macedonia and help us. And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go forth into Macedonia, [x]concluding that God had called us to announce to them the glad tidings. Having sailed away, therefore, from Troas, we went in a [a]straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis, and thence to [b]Philippi, which is the first city of that part of Macedonia, a colony; and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

u ch. 18. 23. *cf.* Gal. 1.2. *cf.* Gal.4.13 -15.
v ver. 7. *cf.* Rom. 1. 13. *cf.*Rom.15. 22-29. *cf.* ch. 8.29.
w *cf.* ch. 21. 4, 11. *ctr.*1Thess. 2. 18. *cf.* Rom. 8. 9-16.
x *cf.* ch.10.3, 9-16.
y *cf.* ch. 22. 17-21. *cf.*Ps.68 31.
z *cf.* ch. 10. 19, 20. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 15.
a *cf.* ch.20.6.
b Phil. 1. 1. *cf.*ch.19.21.

* Some omit "of Jesus."

3. The controlling hand and guidance of the Spirit are here very clearly seen. There was no one method of it,—and this is for our instruction, as well as the fact itself. If the broad commission be to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," that in no wise sets aside the fact that there is to be subjection to God as to the way of carrying this out. His personal interest in it is such that He cannot leave to hap-hazard, or to the fallible judgment of men, the questions of time and place, and indeed of any other matters in connection with a work so precious. There is need—even for an apostle, there always was—for every one who would have success in his work to take every debatable point into the sanctuary for guidance. *How* we shall be guided, we see here to be another matter. They pass through Phrygia and Galatia, where we hear afterwards of disciples who are, no doubt largely, if not altogether, the fruit of their labor at this time. They then turn westward towards proconsular Asia, which included Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, that is, all the western coast,—at another time to be evangelized by Paul from Ephesus with large results. Now, however, they are forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the Word there. They seek from Mysia, therefore, to go north-east into Bithynia; but here again, with more of outward restraint apparently, "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." In both these cases we are left without positive means of ascertaining the character of the hindrance: for the first word does not necessarily signify a verbal prohibition. Satan too might hinder, as the apostle says to the Romans; but hindrance by the Spirit would, no doubt, be realized by its character, if not sometimes without serious and profitable exercise: the enemy cannot so well mimic the work of God as to deceive the one who is truly single-hearted. Indeed the unique expression used here—the Spirit of Jesus—may well intimate this: the Spirit in the power of which He walked upon earth; Jesus being the personal Name by which He was known on earth.

Thus they are hindered from going whether to the right or to the left. If they go forward, they must go to Troas. There, almost upon the old battle-ground between Europe and Asia, they were just opposite Macedonia: and there that vision appeared in the night to Paul, in which a man of Macedonia, representative of the whitening harvest fields beyond, stood and besought him, saying, "Come over and help us!" Immediately they concluded that the Lord had called them to announce the gospel in those parts, and sought to go forth into Macedonia.

Thus, after a time of fruitful and happy work, they are left for awhile to

SECTION 2. (Chap. xvi. 13–40.)
Progress through conflict.

1 (13–15): A heart divinely opened.

1. AND on the [c]sabbath-day we went outside the gate * by the [d]river, where it was the custom for prayer to be, and we sat down and spake to the [e]women who had come together. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of [f]Thyatira, who worshiped God, heard us; whose [g]heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul. And when she

*Some read "city."

[c] *cf.* ch.17.2.
[d] *cf.*Gen.24. 11.
[e] *ctr.* ver. 9. *cf.* Zech. 4. 10.
[f] *cf.* Rev. 2. 18. *cf.* ch.10. 2.
[g] *cf.* ch. 11. 18. *cf.*Jno.6.44. *cf.*2Cor.4.6.

groping and uncertainty, headed off from different roads that seem open to them, yet shut up by this to take the direction in which the Lord was in fact bringing them, until in due time the uncertainty is removed, and they receive definite assurance as to what is in His mind. How comforting to us, conscious of many perplexities, is this little glimpse of the way of one like Paul! It may be said however, that we can hardly expect a vision at last to resolve our doubts, and that thus we are still left without the consolation we might derive from this. But neither did the apostle expect or in general receive a vision to guide him. It is not given to any man to walk habitually in such open light. It would not really encourage faith, which has to do with the unseen and not the seen. And perhaps the record here may serve a purpose of good by preventing our expectation of any one method of assurance, and casting us upon Him to meet us in any way He please; so that we may learn the better His various speech, and be more on the alert to discover Him under whatever apparent disguises. Doubtless the man of Macedonia shows us the appeal to that in us which is, or should be, at all times the motive power; and the weighing of comparative needs, as well as of what in the Lord's ways He has been leading on to, will have its place in determining the issue for us. After all, no rules can be given which will not probably have large exception in actual working out. The Lord is able to give assurance to the heart that honestly seeks to be subject to Him; and that is the main point.

Another beautiful touch in the narrative is found here:—At Troas we discern, simply by the change of the pronoun used, that the narrator himself has joined the party of Paul. His name is never once mentioned, and it is only by the change from "they" to "we" that we are able to trace him from Troas to Philippi, where he seems to remain until Paul returns, after his long stay at Ephesus, when he rejoins and travels with him to Jerusalem (chap. xx. 6–xxi. 18). There, during Paul's long imprisonment, we lose sight of him again; but upon the apostle's voyage to Italy, once more he is with him the whole way to Rome (Chap. xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16). Through all he certainly filled no unimportant place,—one would say more so than others whose names are mentioned; yet he keeps to this reticence which characterizes him all along the way. There is no trace of self-consciousness about him, as one may say; and how beautiful is this in the inspired historian of such a book as this! what an example for us, who are, alas, so apt to give at least their due value to all our doings. It is surely a lesson which we shall do well to take to heart.

Sec. 2.

Philippi is evidently the starting-point of the history proper, as the Spirit of God is pleased to take it up for our instruction. It begins with conflict, and the power of Satan is more nakedly manifest here than at Paphos upon the former journey. It is no longer, however, debased Judaism that is the instrument, but heathenism, the rule of the demons or false gods, which had for the world at large usurped the place of the One true God. The power of the world has here therefore to be reckoned with, and the progress of the gospel in the teeth of persecution. Yet under no circumstances does the gospel succeed so

had been [h]baptized, and her [i]house, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be [j]faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

2 (16 24): Satan for and against.

2. And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of [k]prayer, that a certain female slave, having a [l]spirit of Python, met us, who brought her masters much [m]gain by soothsaying. She, having followed Paul and us, cried, saying, [n]These men are servants of the Most High God, who show unto you the way of salvation.

h ver. 33. ch.8.38.etc.
i cf. ver. 31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 14. *cf.* Lk. 18. 15, 16. *cf.* Gen. 18. 19.
j cf. 2 Jno.4-11. *cf.* 2 Sa. 20. 16 22. *cf.* Phil.4.3.
k cf. ch.2.42. *cf.* ch. 6. 4.
l cf. Matt. 15. 22; *cf.* ch. 8. 9; *cf.* ch. 19. 19. *m* ver. 19. *n cf.* Mk. 1. 34; *cf* Lk. 8. 28; *cf.* Ex. 7. 11, 12; *cf.* ch. 19. 13–16.

well; and Philippi is a marked instance of this,—always in lively sympathy with the gospel, as we know from the epistle to the saints there; and to whom the apostle speaks as to sympathetic hearers of his own earnest pressing forward in what was to him a race for a prize. The name Philippi, "fond of horses," naturally reminds us of this, and stamps with its significance spiritually those who now come before us, as well as the whole-hearted laborers the fruit of whose work they are. Progress through conflict may well characterize this section; and there is little true progress made where the adverse power is not realized.

1. The beginning here is in a humble way enough. Here, where they have been brought by a vision of imploring need, the very man of the vision does not appear; and in the absence of any synagogue, such as in general provided them with their first opportunity, they are fain to go outside the city-gate, by the bank of the river where it was the custom for prayer to be, and speak to the women who seem alone to have the heart to come together. We see that they are not men who will miss a small door open in seeking a large one; and here also, if there be effectual entrance, it must be the Lord who makes it. The heart of Lydia* is thus divinely opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul. Her baptism soon follows, with that of her house, or family, as if the natural consequence of her own faith. So undoubtedly would a proselyte to Judaism as she was have considered it; and the Lord has long since assured us that such a rule as to the kingdom of God has not been repealed (Matt. xviii. 14). Entrance into the Church is not at all in question; to which the baptism of the Spirit alone could introduce. It is the confusion between Church and Kingdom which has largely been the cause of the difficulty upon these points which has arisen. The doctrine is not here before us to consider. Lydia, as the faithful person that she desires to be known as, does not shrink from identifying herself with those who have been the means of bringing her the truth which has won her. In those days it was not possible to be long ignorant of what it involved to do this; but with whole-hearted decision she at once presses the little company of Christ's witnesses to come into her house and abide there; and her earnestness will admit of no refusal: she constrained them. In fact the clouds were already gathering which portended a storm which was soon to break.

2. The enemy does not begin, however, with an open attack—far from it: he announces himself in the first place as himself a witness to the message that Paul brings! A female slave, having a spirit of Python (supposed to be inspired by Apollo) and who brought her masters much gain by her divinations, followed Paul and his companions on their way to the place of prayer, and day after day

* Lydia's occupation and the city whence she came are given, and these with the significance of her name, would doubtless help in illuminating the brief narrative we have of her conversion, had we eyes to see. Thyatira was a city in Asia, where the door had just been closed on Paul. The first convert in Europe was from that city, and thus the continuity of the work is shown. Her business—said to be characteristic of the city—had to do with the adornment of the natural man. Her lowliness is in striking contrast with the Church of Thyatira (Rev. ii. 18, etc.), which represents the Church of Rome, the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet color."—S. R.

And this she did many days. And Paul, being [o]distressed, turned and said unto the spirit, I [p]charge thee in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out the same hour. And her masters, seeing that the hope of their [q]gains was gone, seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the market-place before the [r]rulers; and having brought them to the prætors, they said, These men, being Jews, exceedingly [s]trouble our city, and teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or practise, being Romans. And the [t]multitude rose up too against them; and the prætors, having torn off their [u]garments from them, commanded to [v]beat them with rods. And having laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into [w]prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their [x]feet fast in the stocks.

o cf. Phil. 1. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.
p cf. Mk. 5. 8.
q cf. ch. 19. 24–26.
r ch. 17. 6, etc. *cf.* Mk. 13. 9.
s cf. ch. 6. 13, 14.
t cf. ch. 14. 19. *cf.* ch. 19. 28, 29
u cf. 1 Thess. 2. 2.
v cf. 2 Cor. 11. 25.
w cf. ch. 8. 3.
x cf. Jer. 20. 2. *cf.* ch. 12. 10.

cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who show you the way of salvation." It was an astonishing testimony from one accredited by the multitude as a true prophetess, but whose whole condition spoke to those who could discern the truth of dreadful bondage to an evil spirit! Yet it was in this case a true testimony, and which from such lips would naturally bring the attention of many to the truth. Nor had those accredited by it any responsibility apparently in the matter. Why should they not even accept such homage to the truth forced from the mouth of a demon? So had the evil spirits in the Lord's time owned Him as the Holy One of God whom men scoffed at as the Nazarene. But He had silenced them, and cast them out; and now also there could be no alliance between the awful power that held the world captive and Him who is its Deliverer. Satan, if he will testify, shall testify in being cast out; and the apostle, though for a time simply ignoring his effort to attach himself as a parasite to the tree of life, at last brings to bear on him the power of the Name of Jesus Christ, and his captive is set free.

Alas, not always was there to be the wisdom to discern the attack of the enemy in that which spoke highly of the way of salvation, and glorified its ministers. And so in fact was the way to be perverted, and the ministry to become the chief agency in its perversion; the little seed became a tree, with the birds of the air lodged securely in its branches. Who can doubt that we have here a forecast of that which has now become history?—though the disaster wrought is not yet all told out.

Alliance or persecution,—these are the alternatives: false friendship or open war. The apostle's act shows at once his acceptance of the issue, and presages the final result; though for the present—and this in the ordering of God for blessing to His own—the conflict may seem largely to go against them. The cross must be the way to the crown, as the Lord has fully assured us; and "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." The world is adverse, and the condition of progress is that we make our way through hostile forces. At Philippi, the enemy seeks to turn his first discomfiture into success. The loss of their gains stirs up the girl's masters to drag Paul and Silas before the magistrates, with the charge that as Jews they are troubling the city by introducing customs unlawful to them as Romans. The prejudice against Jews was great, and the last part of the charge had in it a certain amount of truth, as well as ability to rouse the fanaticism of Romans. "The letter of the Roman law, even under the republic, was opposed to the introduction of foreign religions; and though exceptions were allowed, as in the case of the Jews themselves, yet the spirit of the law entirely condemned such changes in worship as were likely to unsettle

3 (25–40): God manifesting Himself.

3. But about [y]midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; and the prisoners listened to them. And suddenly there was a great [z]earthquake, and the foundations of the prison shook; and immediately all the doors were [a]opened, and every one's bonds were loosed. And the jailer, being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to [b]kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself [c]no harm; for we are all here. And having called for [d]lights, he sprang in, and [e]trembling

y *cf.* Job 35. 10. *cf.* ch. 13. 52. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.
z *cf.* ch. 4. 31. *cf.* Rev. 6. 12–17.
a *cf.* ch. 5. 19. *cf.* ch. 12. 4–7.
b *cf.* ch. 12. 19. *cf.* Matt. 27. 5. *cf.* 1 Sa. 31. 4, 5.
c *cf.* ch. 27. 24, 44; *cf.* Mk. 5. 5.
d *cf.* Ps. 119. 105, 130.
e *cf.* ch. 9. 4; *cf.* Heb. 10. 31.

the minds of the citizens, or to produce any tumultuous uproar . . . . Thus Paul and Silas had undoubtedly been doing what in some degree exposed them to legal penalties; and were beginning a change which tended to bring down, and ultimately did bring down, the whole weight of the Roman law on the martyrs of Christianity" (*Conybeare and Howson*).

Thus the prince of this world had taken means to secure himself against the truth which might dethrone him; and at Philippi different causes combined to rouse the excitement of the mob so as to carry the magistrates along with it. The arrested men are stripped and beaten in the merciless way natural, not merely in the hard pagan world, but in the lawless condition in which things were at present. Bruised and bleeding they are thrust into prison, with a charge to the jailer to keep them safe; who on his part thrusts them into the innermost dungeon, and their feet into the stocks.

These are the world's weapons, which are freely used upon unarmed and defenceless men, teachers, as an oracle of their own had loudly proclaimed, of the way of salvation. But if the weapons of these men are not carnal, they are, in the language of one of the sufferers here, "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," and presently the prison walls are stirred to their foundations, as vibrating to the unaccustomed sound of prayer and praise from lips that cannot be silenced as the hearts that move them cannot be stilled.

3. "At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; and the prisoners listened to them."

What a new sound it must have been! Had it been in a Christian land, as we say, however poorly any land may be that, we should think of memories that it would awaken in whatever hardened hearts; but here there were no memories to awaken; it was a new gospel of gladness going forth, which in such circumstances those old Romans knew not. They could die well, as we know;—sternly, grimly, they could die; with their song too upon their lips, as heroes, patriots, and in softer moods of love and loyalty; but all this was inspiration from earthly sources, and not strange to men: here was inspiration of another kind,—a new strain that held the listeners by its rapt unearthliness, its confidence and joy in an unseen God. Here was its revelation—its gospel: would there be answer to this undoubting claim upon One assumed so near and competent?

Suddenly an unexpected answer came: a great earthquake rocked the prison to its foundations; and in a moment all the doors were opened, and every one's bonds were loosed! Yet all the more the wonder held them: they were in hands so manifestly mighty, so interested too, and guided by purpose for the manifestation of which they could only wait. Did not some realize perhaps, that there was here a God worth waiting for, whom it must be a joy to know?

There was one, however, to whom what had taken place was a message of death, or seemed such. The jailer, roused from sleep by the sudden shock, and seeing the prison doors open, supposed that the prisoners had escaped. In that case, from the severity of the Roman law there would have been for him no

fell down before Paul and Silas. And leading them out, he said, Sirs, [f]what must I do to be saved? And they said, [g]Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,* and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy [h]house. And they spake to him the [i]word of the Lord, with all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and [j]washed their stripes, and was [k]baptized, he and

[f] *cf.* ch. 2. 37. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10. *ctr.* Lk. 18. 18–23. *cf.* Job. 9. 2.
[g] Jno. 3. 16. Jno 6. 28, 29. ch. 13. 38, 39. Rom. 10. 6–11. 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[h] ch. 11. 14.

* Some omit "Christ."

cf. Gen. 7. 1; *cf.* ch. 2. 39; *cf.* Is. 54. 13. [i] *cf.* ch. 10. 36–43; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 1–4; *cf.* Rom. 10. 17. [j] *ctr.* ver. 24; *cf.* Gal. 5. 22. [k] ver. 15.

escape. He had drawn his sword to kill himself, in despair of life, when a voice of quiet assurance from the depths of the prison arrested him. "Do thyself no harm," it called; "for we are all here." In that instant the voice of God had spoken to him; the keeper and his captives had changed places: the perfect authority breathing in these words, coupled with mercy to himself so great, which had laid aside all that self-concern prompted to, to care for a mere careless and hardened persecutor, smote him with conviction that God was with these men. He was in their hands, and not they in his. Conscience and heart were roused in him together; the sense of sin, and of goodness that drew him after it. He called for lights, and sprang in, and fell down before Paul and Silas, trembling with these new emotions; and bringing them out, with the voice of the prophetess, no doubt, ringing in his ears, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

It was such a cry as divine grace awakens and responds to. The facing of death immediately before, the consciousness of the divine hand in all that had taken place, had been used of the Spirit of God to make him understand what salvation would mean, though not the way of it. The way he did not understand; nor could he have understood without further help the simple words (to us, thank God!) in which it was made known to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,—thou and thy house." It is a blessed word; blessed in the largeness of assurance that clings to it; and which, though on opposite sides misconceived, we are not to give up on that account.

It is faith in a personal Saviour that is preached to the convicted man,—a committing himself to One mighty to save; a believing *on*, which is trusting, leaning on. It is not a doctrine simply that he is to accept, but a living Person who is to be trusted.

But then it is a Person who has accomplished a work for men, in the power of which He is Lord and Christ; not simply Sovereign Ruler, but the "Anointed" Priest, the Representative of His people. As having stood in our place upon the cross, He stands as the One in whom we are accepted before God.

It is necessarily, therefore, faith which saves, just because it is Christ who saves; it is not the value of faith in itself, although there *is* value in faith; for it is the real active principle in every soul: so that it can be said, "Faith, if *it* have not works, is dead, being alone." It works because it puts Christ in His place, and so God (as manifested in Christ) in His also. But as contrasted with works it is the very confession of creature nothingness and worthlessness, in which it lays hold of Another as all its competence and all its boast. Repentance and faith are thus but the opposite sides of the amazing change which is wrought in conversion: the one is the face turned towards God, as the other is the back turned upon self. Each therefore implies the other.

But now as to the closing words, "thou and thy house:" have they any special encouragement as to the family of a believer, or have they not? Do they mean only "thou, if thou believest, and thy house also, if they believe"? Or do they mean something more than this? Would there be need to assure the penitent here, that faith being the way of salvation, it was as open to his house upon their believing as to himself? It does not seem as if he would need to be assured of that.

all his, immediately. And having brought them up into his house, he set [l]food before them, and [m]rejoiced with all his house, he having believed God. And when it was day, the prætors sent the lictors, saying, Let those men go. And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, The prætors have sent to let you go; now therefore go out, and depart in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly uncondemned,

l cf. Heb. 6. 10. *cf.* Matt. 25. 35, 36.
m cf. ch. 2. 46. *cf.* Rom. 15 13. *cf.* Lk. 15 6, 7.

On the other hand, there should not need to say, that if faith be, as it surely is, the way of salvation, there is no exemption of the family of a believer from the necessity of faith. If there should possibly be any, as is sometimes stated, who with the plain word of Scripture before them can yet hold that for a believer's house there is even the possibility that without faith they may still please God, or that the father's faith can in anywise be proxy for that of the child, such a superstition needs only to be brought into honest daylight to be refuted. Quite a different thing it is to believe that there are special promises to a believer's house, not unconditional, and yet conditioned only upon his being in practical reality, and in relation to that which is in question, a believer. Such a belief has plenty to ground itself upon in Scripture, and is not a superstition but a faith.

Take Abraham, "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11), as an illustration and somewhat more. "I know him," says the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and *they shall* keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. xviii. 19). Here is, indeed, not a promise but an assurance, grounded upon that which the practical character of his faith wrought in the Old Testament example of it. Himself called out from the idolatry around to keep the way of the Lord, he acknowledged Him as the God of his household as well as his own God. With such purpose of heart the wise man's proverb would be fulfilled as to his house, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). This is the rule of the Christian's house, according to which he is to bring up his children in the "nurture (or discipline) and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4). To this the promise applies that assures him that it shall be effectual; and not in vain is the assurance. The faith which it is true they need cannot be imparted by all that man can do for them: how comforting then the word which entitles confidence in the Lord to whom we bring them, and whose we would have them, that nevertheless this "discipline and admonition" shall be effectual! Discipleship, government, discipline belong to the kingdom; and "thou and thy house" have always been the rule in the kingdom of God. Yet all here is distinctly conditional, not absolute, as the Gospels fully show us; and to this, and not to the Church, is baptism introductory (see Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, *notes*); all is perfectly intelligible, therefore, when we find directly here, that "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house;" and that the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, immediately."

Notable it is that of Israel's "set times" (Lev. xxiii.), which typically present God's ways (as we say dispensationally), on to the end which is God's rest, those from Passover to Pentecost speak of what was indeed offered to Israel, and thus might have been hers, but being rejected through unbelief, they have passed from her in their spiritual significance and become the peculiar portion of the (characteristically Gentile) Church. No doubt can be entertained as to Pentecost; but the Sheaf of First-fruits also, which is Christ in resurrection, the promise of the harvest to come, is also ours whose portion will be with Him in this, while Israel inherits hers upon earth. Accordingly the feasts which speak of the national blessing come afterwards, with an interval between, in the

men that are [n]Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out [o]secretly? Nay, indeed, but let them come themselves, and bring us out. And the lictors reported these words to the prætors; and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go [p]away out of the city. And after having gone out of the prison, they entered into [the house of] Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they [q]comforted them and departed.

n *cf.* ver.21. *cf.*ch.22.25-29. *ctr.*ch.23.6. *cf.*ch.25.11, 12. *cf.*Is.30.2,3.
o *cf.* 1 Pet.4. 15, 16. *cf.*1 Cor.10. 32 with 1 Pet. 2. 12, 15.
p *cf.*Lk 8.37.
q *cf.* ch. 14. 22. *cf.* Phil. 2. 1, 2.

seventh month; the feast of trumpets gathering them afresh, at the new moon, when the Sun of righteousness begins to shine afresh upon Israel; the day of atonement then showing their sins put upon the scapegoat and sent away; and finally the feast of tabernacles consummates their blessing.

Passover, let us notice, is not like the day of atonement, one sacrifice covering all the people, but "a lamb for a house," each family distinctly represented. Nay, if one should be defiled at the time of its celebration, or on a journey afar off, a second Passover can be kept, to remedy the omission. I do not say but that, in a secondary sense, this may apply to Israel, who were indeed defiled at the time of Christ's suffering for men; but this would only confirm the more the application of the Passover primarily to the present going out of the gospel in the day of Israel's rejection.

But what then is the principle that faces us in the Passover? Clearly, it is "Thou and thy house;" the heads of the houses kill the lamb, and sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the two side-posts of the houses where they eat it. The family character of the redemption feast is manifest; and notice again that it is at Philippi, among those who are Gentile—no synagogue of the Jews in the place, and not a word of any man of Israel in the place, save only the preachers themselves, that we hear what we may call now the passover gospel—"Thou shalt be saved: thou and thy house."

What a change has passed, and as in a moment, upon the hardened instrument of heathen cruelty and opposition to the word of Christ! "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and having brought them up into his house, set food before them, and rejoiced with all his house, believing God." Although we have to translate perhaps in this way, on account of the difficulty of other rendering in English, yet it should be understood that the expression "with all his house" is not here as in the case of Crispus afterwards where it is said that he "believed with all his house" (chap. xviii. 8). Here it is an adverb, and there should be a reason for the difference, the effect of which would be to make the joy more simply his own. It is certain, at least, that although they had spoken the word to all that were in his house, faith is ascribed to himself alone.

The work in the prison is done, and now indeed the prison doors can hold them no longer. The day having come, the magistrates sent the lictors with a curt message to "Let those men go." But Paul is concerned that there should be no avoidable reproach left upon the testimony, and he refuses to be dismissed in this manner after the public wrong upon men uncondemned. The magistrates are afraid when they hear that they are Roman citizens they have been treating in this manner, and come in humble fashion to bring them out; begging them, however, to leave the city. They return therefore to Lydia's house; and after having there met the brethren (of whom, in the time that had elapsed, and as from the epistle afterwards we cannot but infer that, there were many), and having comforted them, they departed.

SECTION. 3. (Chap. xvii.)
Renewals.

1 (1-9): Another King

1. Now when they had journeyed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to [r] Thessalonica, where was the synagogue of the Jews; and Paul, as his [s] custom was, went in unto them, and on three sabbath days discoursed with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that the Christ must needs have [t] suffered and [u] risen up from among the dead; and that this [v] Jesus, whom I announce unto you, is the Christ. And some of them [w] believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the Greeks who [x] worshiped, a great multitude, and of [y] chief women not a few. But the Jews being moved to [z] jealousy, and having taken to [themselves] certain [a] wicked men of the market, and gathering a crowd, set the city in a [b] tumult; and having beset the

r *cf.* Phil. 4. 16. 1 Thess 1.1.
s ver.10,etc.
t *cf.* Lk. 24. 26, 27. *cf.* Ps.22. 1. *cf.*Is.53.4-7. *cf.*Zecb.13. 7.
u *cf.*Ps.16.9-11. *cf.*Ps.110.1.
v *cf.*ch. 18.5, 28. *cf.*Matt. 16. 15-17.
w *cf.* ver.12.
x *cf.* ch. 16. 14.
y *cf.* ch. 13. 50. *cf.*Phil.4.3.
z *cf.*ch. 5.17. *cf.* Mk. 15. 10.

cf. 1 Thess. 2. 14-16. a *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 10; *cf.* ch. 6. 11. b *cf.* ch. 19. 23, etc.

Sec. 3.

The three narratives following unite together to show the renewal in different ways accomplished by Christianity. At Thessalonica the charge brought against it is in one sense true, and its glory, that there is another King—Jesus. At Berea the movement is peaceful and not revolutionary, though a great advance; the new revelation borne witness to by the old, which it fulfils and justifies. At Athens, at the highest point of civilization in the Gentile world, the need is deepest and most fundamental: it is the unknown God, once known, but from whom they have turned, who has afresh to be revealed in the blessed gospel of Jesus and the resurrection.

1. Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia; and here was the synagogue of the Jews—the only one which, apparently they possessed in those parts. Accordingly we find Paul here in the synagogue, and reasoning from the Scriptures. A suffering Messiah was always the offence to the Jew; and the necessity for this suffering, as well as the fact of the resurrection of the Lord, becomes therefore the apostle's theme. The effect among the Jews themselves, however, is not so great as among the proselytes, of whom a great multitude, and among them many women of chief rank, believe. This as usual arouses the jealousy of the unbelieving Jews, who are not ashamed to associate themselves with the rabble of the market-place to accomplish their ends, and drive the unwelcome strangers from the place. A tumult is raised and they beset the house of Jason,* where they were lodging, but do not find them; and failing in this, drag off Jason and certain of the brethren before the city-rulers. The charge is disregarding the decrees of Cæsar for the commandments of a new King, Jesus. And, though this is, of course, their malice—a repetition of the old attack upon the Lord Himself—yet it is striking to note how constantly in the epistles to the Thessalonians afterwards the coming of the Lord is spoken of. The Kingdom itself is only twice actually mentioned in the two epistles; but that the coming was to introduce this could not fail to have been a part of the teaching in the synagogue. That they were a company waiting for God's Son from heaven was soon known throughout Macedonia and Achaia; and Jews could not be ignorant

* Jason means apparently "healer." Doubtless he was a Christian, as he is spoken of in Rom. xvi. 21. How like the Jews it was to refuse their own mercies. Christianity was the "healing" they needed individually and nationally, but in their mad hatred of Jesus they would forfeit every blessing. "When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered." "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by the arms; but they knew not that I healed them." However, a true pledge has been given by the true Jason, and one day, for Israel and Judah both, it will be said, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (Hos. vii. 1; xi. 3; xiv. 4).—S. R.

house of Jason, sought to bring them forth unto the people. And not having found them, they [c]dragged Jason and certain brethren before the city-rulers,* crying out, These men who have [d]stirred up the habitable earth are come here also; whom Jason hath received; and these all do [e]contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another [f]king, Jesus. And they troubled the multitude and the city-rulers, when they heard these things; and having taken [g]security of Jason and the rest, they let them go.

* "Politarchs:" their special title in Thessalonica.

[c] *cf.* ch. 18. 17.
[d] *cf.* Lk. 23. 5. *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21. *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.
[e] *cf.* ch. 25. 10–12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.
[f] *cf.* Lk. 23. 2. *cf.* Jno. 18. 33–37. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 13–16. *cf.* Rom. 13. 1–7.
[g] *cf.* ch. 5. 40.

of what this would mean in connection with Messiah's reign. The attack for the present, ends without serious consequences. The rulers only take security of Jason and the others, and let them go. Paul and Silas are sent away by the brethren under cover of the night, and escape to Berea; although it could not be long, with such a testimony as that given by the newly gathered assembly, before persecution would revive, as in fact we know it did (1 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 4); and this through the rancor still of those who should have been the first to welcome the announcement.

Brief as is the whole account here, it is evident that this is what the work in Thessalonica is intended to be associated with,—the coming of a kingdom such as the world has never seen, but which alone will give it the peace it craves. Peace can only be the effect of righteousness, and this not simply in the supreme head, but also in each subordinate authority,—when "the mountains shall bring peace unto the people, and the hills, by righteousness" (Ps. lxxii. 3). Christ is in this way "the Desire of the nations," even although the nations with one consent united against Him, and a Christian nation is still little more than a convenient phrase. Nothing but judgment will put the world at the feet of Christ, and the "Great Shepherd of the sheep" must yet shepherd the nations with an iron rod (Ps. ii. 9). Even for their own blessing—and it is in fact the history of every converted soul—men must be warred upon and overcome.

Yet what a hope it is—the only possible one, as the history of the world bears witness—the Patient Sufferer of the Cross the fulfilment of David's picture of—

> "A righteous Ruler over men,
> A Ruler in the fear of God!
> Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
> A morning without clouds:
> From the brightness after rain
> The herb springeth from the earth" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4).

But if thus the King cometh, the Kingdom, in a true and blessed sense, is here already. Already is He Lord and Christ, and all authority in heaven and earth is given to Him. He is on the Father's throne, and we are "translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 13). It is a Kingdom faith indeed alone can recognize, and yet for faith with glorious meaning. His subjects suffer, and the truest most; yet still it is "the Kingdom," if also "the patience, of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9). And while this does not set aside the subordinate authority of Cæsar, but makes us subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Pet. ii. 13), it turns these "powers that be" into "ministers of God for good" (Rom. xiii. 4), and for faith produces a marvelous change. For even a wrong done to me in intent on the part of man, if I realize *His* intent in it, becomes the wholesome discipline of love, if not more unveiled blessing. How resentment is quieted, the fretted heart tranquilized, the soul encouraged, wisdom is given to us, as we are kept in the power of a truth like this! Paul and Silas may sing in their Philippian dungeon, before the earthquake executes its beneficent mission, and frees them from their shackles. Christ is on the throne; and while still we are to keep the word of His patience (Rev. iii. 10), that too is blessing, and fellowship with Him is perfected in it.

2 (10-15): Progressive testimony.

2. And the brethren immediately [h]sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berœa; who, being arrived, went into the [i]synagogue of the Jews. And these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with all [j]readiness of mind, [k]searching the scriptures day by day whether these things were so. [l]Therefore many of them believed; and of the Grecian women that were of the higher class, and of the men, not a few. But when the Jews from Thessalonica knew that the word of God was announced also by Paul in Berœa, they came there also, [m]stirring up* the multitudes. And then immediately the brethren [n]sent away Paul, to go as far as to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus remained there. And they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and having received a charge to Silas and Timotheus that they should [o]come to him as quickly as possible, they departed.

h ver. 14. *cf.* Matt. 10. 23.
i ver. 1, etc.
j *cf.* ch. 16. 14. *ctr.* ch. 14. 2.
k *cf.* Jno. 5. 39, 40. *cf.* vers. 2, 3. *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23.
l *cf.* Ps. 119. 130. *cf.* Rom. 10. 17.
m *cf.* ver. 5
n ver. 10.
o *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 9. *cf.* ch. 15. 40.

3 (16-34): Revelation of the unknown God.

3. But while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was [p]aroused within him, when he beheld the city full of idols. He reasoned therefore in the [q]synagogue with

p *cf.* ch. 18. 5. *cf.* ch. 14. 13. 16.
q vers. 2, 10.

* Many add, "and troubling."

2. In Berea we find, as in the case of the eunuch, the old dispensation leading on its disciples to the new. Revelation has always been progressive; and even now that it is complete, there is, in its gradual opening up under the guidance of the Spirit, something that seems analogous to this. Faith is in this way ever being tested, while also the new approves itself as of God by the firm hold which it retains of the past, in which it roots itself, and upon which it throws fresh light. The new truth cannot be in contradiction to the old, which in fact has led on towards and prepared the way for it. Nothing could seem more contradictory than the law and the gospel; and yet the latter is the necessary complement of the former. *Legalism* is the contradiction, and not the law.

The Jews at Berea are more noble than those at Thessalonica, the gospel commending itself to them by its own inherent credibility, its witness to the conscience and the heart. They were predisposed, therefore, to receive it, while yet they waited till Moses should be heard in testimony. With disciples such as these, miracles are not needed and would rather distract than help. The Word is itself the greatest of miracles—the voice of the Living God, which has sounded on through the ages, never silent, wherever there was an ear to hear. Thus the predisposition to receive the gospel ripens into faith with these Bereans as they search the Scriptures, with vigorous determination day by day. Many believe; and the Grecian women that were honorable (or of the higher class), and of men, not a few. The tidings of it soon reached Thessalonica, only forty-five miles away, and answer comes in the shape of angry emissaries from the unbelievers there, who stir up the multitudes. Again Paul has to flee, though Silas and Timothy, less important in the eyes of the persecutors, are able to remain; and thus the gospel of Christ makes its way to Athens.

3. At Athens Paul is roused by the obtrusive idolatry, nowhere more obtrusive than there, to earnest discussion in the market-place with any whom he meets. In the synagogue he seems to have found nothing; the Athenian spirit may well have had its effect here also, even in a reaction against the new things after which the busy idlers of the city sought, and with which their scorn could confound the good news of salvation by a dying and risen Saviour. As for the Greeks it is the Epicureans and Stoics who assail the preacher, as they think, of new divinities; themselves either sceptic as to any true God whatever,—the

the Jews, and with the worshipers, and in the market-place every day with those he met. And some also of the Epicurean and Stoic [r]philosophers assailed him. And some said, What would this babbler say? and some, He seemeth to be an announcer of strange* divinities: because he announced the glad tidings of [s]Jesus and the resurrection. And they laid hold of him, and brought him to the Areopagus,† saying, Can we learn what this new doctrine is, of which thou speakest? For thou bringest certain [t]strange things to our ears; we would therefore learn what these things mean. Now all Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else than either telling or hearing [u]something new.

*Or, "foreign." †"Mars' hill."

r cf. 1 Cor. 1. 22. *cf.* Col. 2. 8, 9. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 20, 21.

s cf. 1 Cor. 2. 2. vers. 31, 32. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 12.

t cf. ch. 26. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18–25.

u ctr. 1 Jno. 2. 7, 8, 27. *cf.* Is. 57. 20.

world being neither His creation nor His care,—or else on the other side making man independent of Him, and mere fate the real governor both of God and man. The Epicurean sought his end in pleasure; the Stoic stiffened himself in self-righteousness and pride. To the latter indifference was a positive duty; in both were the sure signs of that break-down of the purer philosophy which they followed which showed itself in the open scepticism in turn following them: all showing the consciousness of the failure of philosophy in every form, and the need of that revelation against which it nevertheless so eagerly contended.

After all, in the heart of man lay needs unsatisfied, which could not accept a stone for bread; and the restless questioning of the Athenian spirit bore witness to this also. Babbler as they might think Paul was, they still would hear him; and with courteous phrase they invite him to the Areopagus, where the supreme court of Athens commonly held its sittings. But there was now neither thought of judgment nor a true judicial spirit in the crowd that assembled there. The old world had largely with the Roman come to ask after the truth itself with little thought of finding it. Still, for the moment they listened; and he to whom truth was no question but a joyous and deep conviction, took advantage of the occasion offered to press upon them his one remedy for the common need of man—Jesus and the resurrection.

Everywhere around there were tokens, the speaker said, of their great reverence for divinities. It was easier, according to the satirist, to find a god than a man in Athens. Yet this reverence, misplaced and perverted as it was, had its touching side of appeal as witness to the cry of humanity after God. If they know not the One true God, they must invent one; or, perhaps, as with the Athenians, many; though this is but the testimony that the many cannot fill the place of the One.

Thus man's heart craves for a god; alas, one cannot say, for God: that is another matter. In Israel the true God was known,—had declared Himself, and in such a way as one would have thought would have won their hearts for ever to Himself. What was the answer which in fact they gave to Him? It was for long but the setting up of the idols of their defeated enemies, for whose sins God had cast them out before them! He Himself puts the question which reveals man's conduct in this respect (Jer. ii. 11): "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." This does not make Israel an exception among the nations: man everywhere is man; when Pharisaism suited the prince of this world better than idolatry, the people became zealous monotheists and keepers of the law; and their own words, "Which of the Pharisees have believed on Him?" show the success of the scheme. The question of monotheism is not the question now, and the cross is not for the monotheist, but for the Christian.

And Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said, Men of Athens, I observe how very [v]reverent of divinities ye are: for as I passed through and beheld your objects of worship, I found even an altar on which was inscribed, To an [w]unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly reverence, him *I* [z]proclaim to you. God, who [y]made the world and all things therein,—he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in [z]temples made with hands, neither is served by human hands, as if he needed any thing, when he himself [a]giveth to all life and breath and all things. And he hath made of one blood* [b]every nation of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having fixed their appointed times and the [c]bounds of their habitations, that they might [d]seek God, if indeed they might feel after him and find him, although he is [e]not far from every one of us; for

v *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 5 with 1 Cor. 10. 20. *cf.* Gal. 4. 8.
w *cf.* Rom. 1. 19-21. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21. *cf.* Jno. 4. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 5.
x *cf.* Jno. 1. 18 with 1 Cor. 1. 24, 25.
y Gen. 1. 1. Jno. 1. 1-3. ch. 14. 15.
z *cf.* ch. 7. 48-50.
a *cf.* Gen. 2. 7. *cf.* Dan. 5. 23.
b *cf.* Gen. 11. 1-9. *cf.* Mal. 2. 10. *cf.* Rom. 5.

* "Blood" is omitted by some, but should most probably be retained.

12. *c cf.* Deut. 32. 8; *cf.* Deut. 2. 1-9. *d cf.* ch. 15. 17; *ctr.* Rom. 1. 21. *e cf.* Ps. 139. 7-10; *cf.* Jer. 23. 23, 24; *ctr.* Eph. 2. 13.

Among the heathen also, at this time, change was in the air. The reverence for divinities yet outwardly remained, but Epicureans and Stoics were eating out the heart of it. The "unknown God," upon which Paul with divine sagacity had fixed his eyes, was now really characteristic of the condition, rather than even the goddess who had given her name and wisdom to the city. God was indeed more and more confessedly unknown; and great must have been the wonder, if not scorn, that met the apostle's bold declaration,—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly reverence, Him *I* proclaim unto you."

He goes on immediately to do this,—to set Him in His place in relation to the creature as the Maker of all, therefore the Lord of all,—a place that heathenism never truly gave Him. For the Epicurean, as for the modern scientific heathen, the world was a fortuitous collection of atoms, coming together according to laws of its own,—of the matter which it all was. For the Stoic also, God was but the force in matter,—not existent apart from it. The Platonist also believed matter to be eternal, although he attributed to God the soul which animated it and produced the actually existent world. But as a consequence God is in a continual struggle with that matter which He did not create, and by which He is limited. He can neither conquer it, nor withdraw Himself from it; He is not the absolute Creator and Lord of all whom the apostle announces—the Almighty, in whose control of all the soul of man can find its rest.

Supreme above all, it is thus alone He can be near to all; not dwelling in temples made with hands, which isolate and shut Him up; nor served by human hands, as if He were in need. Sufficient to Himself, He is the Source and Centre of all; life and breath and all things but His gift. None then can make Him his debtor, nor give Him, save of what is but His own.

Such is He then whom this preacher declares to the Athenians: a God who is really God. He proceeds to put man in his place with Him, leveling all distinctions upon which Jew and Greek alike prided themselves, in the assurance of that one blood in which all men participated. Nay, their times and the very bounds of their habitations had been alike fixed by Him who withdrew not His care from any creature He had made, and who had appointed all these, that in the sense of their limitation and dependence, as well as of the divine ordering of things amid which they moved, men might in their need feel after Him and find Him. Nor is He far from any one: for indeed we are encompassed by Him,—in Him we live and move and are! The last is the full generalization: we are

in him we live and move and are; as some of your own [f]poets also have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the [g]offspring of God, we ought not to think that that which is divine is like [h]gold or silver or stone, graven work of art and man's device. The times indeed of this ignorance God [i]overlooked, but now enjoineth men that they all everywhere [j]repent: because he hath appointed a [k]day in which he will judge the habitable earth in righteousness by a Man whom he hath appointed; furnishing assurance unto all, in that he hath [l]raised him from among the dead.

But when they heard of a resurrection of the dead,

[f] *cf.* Tit. 1. 12.
[g] *cf.* Nu. 16. 22. *cf.* Lk. 3. 38. *cf.* Gen. 2. 7.
[h] *cf.* Ps. 115. 4-7. *cf.* Is. 40. 18, 19. *cf.* Dan. 3. 1, etc.
[i] ch. 14. 16.
[j] ch. 26. 20. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.
[k] *cf.* Rom. 2. 16. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 1-3.

cf. Matt. 25. 31-46. [l] ver. 18. *cf.* Rev. 1. 7; *ctr.* Rom. 4. 24, 25.

sustained by Him, we are carried by Him,—more completely than the infant in its mother's arms; for His arms never unclose,—in Him at all times we are: words which he caps with a quotation from their own poets, recognizing the true creative link with God of a spiritual being such as man is, "For we are also His offspring." He is not here considering the effect of the fall, nor as yet man's responsibility, but the place given him in God's design, from which he will be better able to estimate his own departure.

But alas, how far he had got! Was man indeed the offspring of God? and did he think that gold and silver and stone,—dead matter, graven by human skill into some resemblance of himself, could be a worthy representation of the divine? Could the eyes and ears and bodies of men,—things of which God could have no possible need for seeing or hearing—represent that in which they were "in His image"? The spiritual they could not represent! they could only degrade it by such similitudes.

Alas, it was indeed the unknown God they worshiped! And these things characterized times of ignorance which He from whom they had turned had patiently gone on with. God had ignored, as they had. If He had now come in to make Himself known afresh, there ensued for men the necessity of repentance. Judgment was decreed for the whole habitable earth in righteousness, and that by a Man to whom God had testified so as to give full assurance to all by having raised Him from among the dead.

It is of the judgment of the living, not of the dead, that the apostle speaks here, and with the evident intention of announcing the coming of the Lord and the introduction of His Kingdom. Of salvation He had yet said nothing; for his hearers are philosophers, and not the conscience-struck and weary. But of the world's need and its remedy they might still be ready to hear, who were ignorant of their own; and their hearts be stirred by the prospect of a reign of righteousness, in contrast with the hard Cæsarism under which they were pressed down. They have had enough, however; and the mention of resurrection brings their patience to an end. Some mock; while others courteously defer the matter to another time; it is not serious enough to rouse them to hostility. Nothing was to be expected from an audience like this, and even Paul could only turn away and leave them. We hear of no such poverty of result in any other place, but with the wise of this world the wisdom of God is foolishness. Yet here also God could not allow His word to be absolutely barren. "Certain men clave to him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius* the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris." Though tradition has manufactured for the former a bishopric of Athens, and the martyr's crown, these are at present to us names only: the history connected with them remains for disclosure at a future time.

* "Dionysius" is naturally connected with Dionysus or Bacchus, implying one dedicated to him. Etymologically it may mean "divinely pricked" or "spurred." "Damar" is in Greek "one subdued, tamed, broken in to the yoke," and so "a bride."

some [m]mocked; and others said, We will hear thee [n]again concerning this matter. So Paul went out of the midst of them. But certain men [o]clave to him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

SECTION 4. (Chap. xviii. 1–23.)
"Weak things of the world."

1(1-3): The independency of grace.

1. AFTER these things, he departed from Athens and came to [p]Corinth. And he found there a certain Jew, by name [q]Aquila, a Pontian by race, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to [r]depart from Rome, and came unto them. And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them and wrought; for by their trade they were [s]tent-makers.

m *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 12. *cf.* ch. 26. 23–25.
n *cf.* ch. 24. 25. *cf.* ch. 5. 38, 39.
o *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–29. *cf.* Matt. 11. 25, 26.
p 1 Cor. 1. 2. ver. 27 with ch. 19. 1.
q vers. 18, 26. Rom. 16. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 16. 19. 2 Tim. 4. 19.
r *cf.* Lk. 2. 1. *cf.* Phil. 1.
12. s ch. 20. 34; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12; *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 9; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 11; *cf.* Heb. 11. 9 with Heb. 13. 14.

Sec. 4.

It is to the Corinthians that Paul writes at an after-time, of how God has called the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty (1 Cor. i. 27); and they found in themselves the evidence of this. The two epistles to the Corinthians display them strikingly in this character. The first epistle especially, in contrast with that to the Ephesians, which sets before us the Church in its heavenly aspect, shows us the Church in the world, exposed to the influences which beset it from that trinity of evil which perplex the fallen creature. The first part of the epistle (chaps. i.–x.) shows the Corinthians the need of fencing off these; as it too clearly manifests also how weak had been their resistance to them. Corinth was indeed a perfect type of the world as governed by the lusts that rule and rage in hearts away from God—of "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4). Corinth was a proverb, even among the light-hearted Greeks, for this; and those who had been called out from it by the victorious grace of God were still in danger, often imminent indeed, of being again overcome by it. Yet here, as not in philosophic Athens, the Lord had much people. As in His life on earth He was known as the Friend of sinners, and Himself declared that He was the Saviour of the lost, so do we find the gospel true to its character as it goes forth here. In the haunts of vice it found the sick who needed the physician, and could bear also to be told that they needed one. Among the Corinthians, rather than the Athenians, would be those satiated* with the pleasures, convinced of the vanity of a world which they well knew. Here was the very place in which the contrast between this and what the gospel offered could be best told out. If those called were the weak things of the world, how weak also was that world itself, which yet held so many in its bondage!

1. The apostle departs from Athens, then, and comes to Corinth; and the spirit in which he entered this busy, rich, luxurious city, he himself has declared. He came with a deep, almost oppressive sense of his responsibility as bringing the testimony of God into the midst of a people so needy, while so alive to their own interest, accustomed to make keen estimate of the wares offered to them, and with every allurement of earth in earnest competition with that which he had to offer, a Saviour already rejected by the world and cast out, condemned and crucified. Well might one so absolutely devoted to his work of ministry, with the burden of souls so upon him, be "in weakness and fear, and in much trembling," as, fresh from his disappointment at Athens, he contemplated the scene before him now. With such an one this could only issue in a

* May not this even be the meaning of "Corinth," from κορέννυμι, "to sate"?

2 (4-8): Separation from the unbelieving Jews.

2. And he reasoned in the [t]synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. And when both Silas and Timotheus came down from Macedonia, Paul was pressed by the word, [u]testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But as they opposed and blasphemed, he shook out his clothes, and said unto them, Your [v]blood is upon your own head; I am [w]pure: from henceforth I will [z]go to the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man, by

t ch. 17. 1, 2, etc.
u *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. *cf.* ver. 28.
v *cf.* Matt. 27. 25. *cf.* Ezek. 33. 4.
w *cf.* ch. 20. 26, 27. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 18, 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.
x ch. 13. 45-47; ch. 28. 24-28; *cf.* Rom. 11. 11 15.

realization more complete than ever of the One Power which alone could be competent to lay hold of and arrest these busy idlers, and bring them to face themselves and God. Jesus Christ the Crucified was indeed his only theme; but if He were the One rejected by the world, He was also the One whom the Spirit glorified: and thus his preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In a city in which oratory and persuasive speech would be peculiarly in requisition, there he relied upon no excellency of speech or of wisdom, used no allurement, but leaned wholly upon the Spirit of God.

There was one adaptation to the state of things at Corinth, however, which is noted for our attention. Not indeed that he practised it nowhere else, for he refers to his doing so afterwards at Ephesus (chap. xx. 34), as in the two epistles to the Thessalonians he shows us that he had done among them. Still it is here for the first time that it is mentioned in the Acts that he labored for his maintenance, and the character of his work also. We are certainly intended to recognize here the suitability of this in wealthy and commercial Corinth. He would not have them think of the gospel as among the wares in which they traded. Money could not buy the priceless gift of God; nor should they be able to think, even for a moment, that he sought what was theirs in anywise. No, he sought themselves only, and in that love of Christ in which He had become poor for men, who was so rich, that they by His poverty might be made rich. Thus Paul in Corinth would take nothing of the Corinthians; for which he justifies himself afterwards in both epistles (1 Cor. ix. 12–18; 2 Cor. xii. 13–18).

It is not without meaning, certainly, that here also, in a place so typical of the world in its highest energy, we should be told that Paul's occupation was that of *tent-making*. Spiritually this needs no interpretation. It is what grace would teach every redeemed soul, as it taught Paul also to serve men in this very attitude of independence of them. Surely there is nothing also like the tent as a symbol of such independence; he that is but a pilgrim in the world can find ability for this, as he cannot who seeks his home in it. While his companions' names are equally significant of the faith which of old has used these travelers' ways: Priscilla or Prisca ("ancient" or "venerable") reminding us, as the apostle does in Hebrews, that "by faith the *elders* obtained a good report," and Aquila ("eagle") of its soaring habit and keen sight. This last is a man of Pontus, or "the deep;" as he that has been in the depth alone learns to rise above his natural condition, and it is "they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters,—these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." All here fits well together, and is of easy interpretation to those who can believe that the word of God deals so much in parables, and that it will bear the microscope after a fashion like this.

2. According to his common practise, Paul begins his testimony in the synagogue, addressing himself there, however, to both Jews and Greeks. From the former he gets little except opposition, going on to open blasphemy; which provokes the apostle on his part to announce his purpose, as at Pisidian Antioch before, to go to the Gentiles. He withdraws, therefore, to the house of a proselyte named Justus, adjoining the synagogue. The "just" was the characteristic

name Justus, who worshiped God, whose house adjoined to the synagogue. But [y] Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.

3 (9-11): A vision.

3. And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a [z] vision, Fear not, but speak, and be not silent: for I am with thee, and no one shall set on thee, to harm thee; for I have [a] much people in this city. And he dwelt there a [b] year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

4 (12-17): The world passive.

4. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment-seat, saying, This man [c] persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of [d] wrong, or wicked

[y] 1 Cor. 1. 14.

[z] *cf.* ch. 10. 10, etc. *cf.* ch. 16. 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 23, 24.

[a] *ctr.* ch. 17. 34. *cf.* ch. 11. 24. *cf.* ch. 13. 48.

[b] *ctr.* ch. 17. 2. *cf.* ch. 19. 10.

[c] *cf.* ch. 16. 20, 21.

[d] *cf.* ch. 19. 37, 38. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.

title of saints under the law; but now he who would be *with* the just must be outside the synagogue. Here the work in Corinth seems fairly to begin: Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believes, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians follow him in the confession of their faith. Thus grace works, in contrast with the law, although it remains true that "not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." None the less the Spirit wrought; and whatever those were who were brought together, we know that they came behind in no gift (1 Cor. i. 7): God needed not the assistance of the world's endowments although He does not despise or set aside that which has been of His own communication who is Creator of all (Matt. xxv. 15). They are called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, from out of and yet in the midst of a world that lieth in the wicked one.

3. Here, as at Troas the vision of a man had appeared to him to invite his entrance into Europe, so now the Lord Himself appears to Paul to encourage him to remain. By revelation, as we learn from Galatians (ii. 2), he had gone up to Jerusalem, to vindicate there the rights of the Gentiles as against the zealots for the law. He had carried thence with him the letter in which the Jewish leaders renounced explicitly what authority in this matter they might be supposed to have. Henceforth all the open testimony of God that we hear of is against his persistence in special Jewish ministrations. He had been told explicitly that the Jews would not receive his testimony concerning Christ, and the twelve had assigned to him the Gentile work, as they themselves assumed the responsibility of that among the Jews (Gal. ii. 7–9). It is impossible not to connect all this with what we shall have in the after-history.

But the vision now is only encouragement. He is expressly guaranteed against harm, and assured of much people belonging to the Lord in this Gentile city, in which the Jews had shown already their opposition in so marked a way, that he must needs turn from them. Corinth was a place naturally discouraging enough; and with his heart so engaged with Israel as he himself has assured us that it was, the special seal now put upon his work in this place is very significant. Accordingly he continues for a year and six months teaching the word of God among them.

4. The Jews display their enmity more and more: and all that he has to experience in the way of persecution arises from this cause. It is they who bring him before the Gentile judgment-seat; and, availing themselves of the permission accorded to them to worship God after their own manner, they complain of him as inciting to an unlawful worship. It is their own law, however, of which they are thinking, and not the Roman one, as Gallio easily discerns; they

recklessness, ye Jews, with reason would I have borne with you; but if it be questions of [e] words and names and of the law ye have, look to it yourselves: I have no mind to be a judge of these matters. And he drove them from the judgment-seat. And they all laid hold on [f] Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio [g] cared for none of these things.

5 (18–22): How the end is reached of the second journey.

5. And Paul, having yet stayed there many days, took

[e] ch. 23. 29. ch. 25. 19.

[f] 1 Cor. 1. 1.

[g] *ctr.* Jno. 19. 13–16. *ctr.* ch. 24. 26, 27.

were never noted for obedience to their Gentile rulers, though for their particular purpose they might profess to have no other king but Cæsar. It was a mere hypocritical plea, as every one knew, and he treats it as such. Doubtless for him it was a question but of words and names, which he can meet with the most philosophic indifference! Think of the weariness, even to a Stoic, of being a judge in such matters! How little he knew of Him who even by means like these was sheltering His people. The accusers were driven from the judgment-seat. The multitude, going further than the judge, beat the ruler of the synagogue before it. But Gallio was still indifferent.

5. Thus protected according to the Lord's assurance, the apostle still remains a considerable time at Corinth; but nothing more is related to us than the fact. This is the end of his progress westward; and from Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, he sets sail for Syria, taking Ephesus, however, by the way. At Cenchrea we have a circumstance given which has divided the opinions of commentators,—that of the vow on the part of one of these travelers. Lechler ventures even to say that it is "involved in an obscurity which will never be removed;" but this is an accusation of an inspired writer which only shows for how little inspiration counts with many professedly orthodox to-day. That there is difficulty in deciding more than one question with regard to it, is quite another matter: the same may be said of multitudes of things in Scripture, which give us needful exercise, and that is all; surely a thing which we cannot expect to be saved from. To say, it cannot be cleared up, is to say, either that Luke meant nothing by it, or meant us to learn nothing (which is practically the same thing), or else that he blundered so painfully as to miss entirely the object for which he has written!

The first question we have to ask is, *who* is it of whom it is recorded here that "he shaved his head in Cenchrea: for he had—or, had had—a vow"? On the one hand Aquila is the one who stands immediately before; on the other, Paul (it is urged) is the principal subject here, and before the mind of the Spirit all through, rather than Aquila. Both these things, however, may be fully allowed without the consequence which is pressed as following. Paul's relation to the vow may be primary or secondary; it may be related to him simply as having to do with one of his company who, if not converted by his means, was yet in fullest connection and sympathy with him. It has been rightly noticed also, as it would seem, that in the passage Priscilla being named first brings Aquila into that place in which he would most naturally appear as the maker of the vow. Still, in two of Paul's epistles (Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19) it has been objected, that the same order of the names occurs; and here we may believe that the reason is one of personal character and usefulness, in which the wife may have been in advance of her husband; and though in ver. 2 Aquila has the precedence, this is not at all certain as to ver. 26. We can only say therefore, that according to the structure of the sentence, the maker of the vow would seem to be Aquila.

Another argument to the same end is obvious, that we might more easily understand this vow of Aquila than of Paul. He is introduced to us at Corinth simply as a certain Jew, with whom Paul works because they were of the same trade, not necessarily of the same faith. If he were a late convert, no one

leave of the brethren and sailed thence to Syria; and with him Priscilla and Aquila, having [h]shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had had a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there; and he entered into the [i]synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to remain with them a longer [t]

[h] *cf.* Num. 6. 5, 18. *cf.* ch. 21. 23, 24. *cf.* Gal. 4. 9. *cf.* Col. 2. 20-23. [t] ver. 4.

could wonder at his having been under a vow when brought to Christ: a vow which may not till now have expired, the shaving of the head, as we naturally judge from the analogy of Nazariteship (though this were not it), took place at the expiration, and not at the commencement. All this would fit together in the simplest manner thus, and provoke no question. It has been said that the record of it would have no value either; but this assuredly is not well considered. A charge against Paul on the part of the Jews was, as we shall soon have witness, that he taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs (chap. xxi. 21). The evidence of Aquila with his shaven head would be in direct opposition to this.

Let Paul be the subject on the other hand, and there is very great difficulty. It is of no use to urge, as has been done, his purification afterwards at Jerusalem, which was undoubtedly a step taken to conciliate the Christian Jews, and conformable enough to his avowed principle to be to those under the law as under the law, that he might gain those who were under the law. A vow was a voluntary act between the person and God, not required of any, and therefore which could give no offence in its non-observance; there was no breach of law in not assuming it. Aquila might have assumed it in his pre-Christian state, when he would naturally let it run on to its termination and have honored Moses in that which was to him as a Christian a thing indifferent; but how could Paul's doctrine of being "dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4) consist with the deliberate *taking up* of that which no conscience of another required, and which, if of his own free choice, would be the going back to build up again the things he had destroyed? Why then should we attribute that to the apostle to which certainly no necessity of the language here obliges us, and for which we have presently to seek all possible excuse in vain? The ethical argument is after all surely the decisive one, unless we are to be content to make an unasked for sacrifice of the apostle's character to show a liberality which is by no means that, in things that are not our own.

Paul then came with his companions to Ephesus, where he left them; he himself going on. But in the meanwhile he embraced the opportunity which the visit gave him to reason in the synagogue with the Jews, according to his wont. Here he found response in such a way that they would willingly have delayed his departure to minister to their need. But it is indeed strange to find that he is not ready to stay; and why? If the words that are in the common version be really part of the text, it is because he must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem! If the words should not be there, he merely promises, if God will, to return. However this be, Jerusalem is in his heart, as we see by that which follows; although if it be not in the questioned words, the name itself is nowhere found. Indeed, in any case the narrative here is brief and as it were hurried. One cannot see what is really accomplished. Instead of any word about keeping the feast, he runs up from Cæsarea, salutes the assembly (we have to infer what assembly,—perhaps to take it as if for him at the moment there were scarcely an assembly elsewhere), yet he does not stay; we do not see what, if anything, is accomplished: the greatly desired visit has a strange unsatisfactoriness about it. It may well be, as we realize from what takes place at a later time, that he *cannot* stay there; he goes down to Antioch, from whence the Spirit had called him to go forth at first; his second missionary journey is thus over.

time, he did [j] not consent; but took leave of them, saying, [I must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem, but]* I will return unto you, if God will: and he set sail from Ephesus. And landing at [k] Cæsarea, he went up and [l] saluted the assembly, and went down to [m] Antioch.

1 (xviii. 23–xix. 20): Uniqueness of power.

SECTION 5. (Chaps. xviii. 23–xx.)

The Assembly with God, and its responsibility.

1 (xviii.23–xix.7): Its sources.

a (xviii. 23–28): The knowledge of Christ.

1. [1] *a* AND having spent some time, he departed, and went through the country of [n] Galatia and Phrygia in order, [o] establishing all the disciples.

j *cf.* ch.20.16.

k *cf.*ch.21.8. *cf.*ch.23.33.

l *cf.*ch. 9.26–28. *cf.* ch. 15. 4. *cf.*ch.21.17, 18.

m ch. 11. 25, 26.

n ch. 16. 6.

o ch. 14. 22. ch.15.32,41.

*Some of the oldest MSS. and versions omit this clause.

In this sudden close of what has been so fruitful and blessed a labor—where neither at Jerusalem or Antioch do we read of anything commensurate with the rest at all—it seems to me that we have the sad foreshadow of that which afterwards closes the active ministry of the great apostle of the Gentiles in a Roman prison. His heart seems breaking over Israel; and Israel alone has no welcome for him. Israel is his betrayer, and the very hope as to her which it seems he cannot resist, but of the fruitlessness of which he has been warned long since, betrays and leads him to disaster. He is in fellowship with the heart at least, if not fully the mind, of that dear Lord and Master, into whose spirit he had drunk so largely. Here his heart yearns with His over Jerusalem. By and by he will have to say with Him, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"

This leave-taking of a beckoning field like that of Ephesus, this hurried visit to the unnamed city, from which, after a salutation to the assembly, he is forced away again, is touching indeed. In the near future he is to yield to his affections a costlier sacrifice. For the present he is spared for new fields of labor and large fruit.

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We are now come to the last labors of the apostle among the Gentiles in liberty, with the constraint of Christ's love alone upon him;—so far, at least, as the Spirit has been pleased to declare them to us. His testimony did not, of course, end here, and through his bonds might acquire a character and power it could not else have. That God was over all, and in all for blessing, needs no demonstration; but this testimony in bonds has another character than that we have been considering. If the apostle were set free afterwards, and made his wished for journey into Spain, we have no account of it; nor is the account that is here given incomplete: it is sufficient for the purpose of the Spirit who has given it, which is not a biography of Paul or any other. The narrative before us has evidently quite another design than this: it is the history of the founding of the Church as the company of the saved, whether Jews or Gentiles, brought out from the Jewish house of bondage and given to enjoy the liberty of grace. Hence we shall find, according to the manner of Scripture elsewhere, that this last portion of the ministration of the mystery will be (whatever else may be in it) very much of the nature of a review and summary of its leading features—not of doctrine but of history—while carrying us on also beyond to the future so full of responsibility and peril, of a divine testimony once more committed to man, whose course has been hitherto little but continued failure. The fact that there would be this is not shirked for a moment, but clearly announced. There would be again the display of sad, mysterious wreckage of all that man could wreck; although God's purposes could not but go on to completion. The epistles, as we know, develop this failure fully.

Along with this, as is natural, there is yet a manifestation of the power of

And a certain Jew, by name [p] Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, mighty in the [q] scriptures, arrived at Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing [r] only the baptism of John; and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him to them and

p *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 4-7.
cf. Tit. 3. 13.
q *cf.* ch. 17. 2.
r *cf.* ch. 19. 3.

God as connected with this testimony,—a power supreme over all the power of the enemy: the failure is not from any failure in this respect, whatever may be the conflict,—a conflict of which the epistle to Ephesus, the assembly mainly before us in all this part, warns us, and of the conditions of it.

Ephesus is indeed the representative assembly everywhere in the New Testament. In the epistle we find the full doctrine of the Church committed to it, not as in those to the Corinthians, as a communion of saints on earth, but in its heavenly character. In Revelation it comes before us in the first place as a vessel of testimony upon the earth. The two epistles exhibit it in contrasted spiritual condition: the first as faithful in Christ; the second as threatened with withdrawal of the candlestick, except it repent. We need not wonder to find this representative character attaching to it in the history also. We see it in its first freshness, and with its endowment of power; but with its responsibility also, and the sad prophecy of what would follow the removal of the apostle from the midst; when grievous wolves would be successors to so true a shepherd, and from among themselves would men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

This, then, is the Deuteronomy of the Acts, with which the history of the "dispensation of the mystery" concludes, so far as active labors are concerned of him to whom it was first committed. The last division of the book has a character of its own which we must consider elsewhere.

1. That which characterizes the whole account of Ephesus as we have it here is the uniqueness of power manifested. It is at the very seat of the enemy's power, as seen in the notorious idolatry there, the worship of Artemis or Diana, in her image that fell down from heaven, as well as in the demon-possessions, sorcery and magic that abounded there. Even on this account must the power of God be put forth in a decisive way. Special miracles are wrought by the hands of Paul; and the very demons themselves become unwilling witnesses, in the mastery shown over all pretenders to that to which where real they must needs be subject.

[1] The sources of this power are also carefully put before us. In Apollos we see the knowledge of Christ in its effect; in the other disciples of John the witness of the Spirit characteristic of Christianity. Here plainly is the secret of the whole matter,—the supreme Name, and He who is come to glorify the absent Lord. In the case of Apollos the Spirit is not mentioned; yet is He freely working in a testimony not confined to Paul, and glorifying therefore the more, Paul's blessed Master.

a First, however, we are shown Paul himself starting fresh from Antioch, in the energy of a love which, caring for all, carries him once more over ground he had visited on his second journey; taking it up now in an orderly manner, so as to overlook none of those who had then been brought to Christ, of whom (in Galatia at least), there were many, and, at present, earnest disciples. Of Phrygia we know nothing except that it had been visited throughout; but the implication is that there also there were many; for whom now he was caring rather than raising up new assemblies.

Meanwhile we hear of a notable arrival at Ephesus in the person of an Alexandrian Jew, from a place well-known already in connection with Philo and his allegorization of the Scriptures, by and by to be more noted for the similar,

more [s]exactly set forth to him the way of God. And when he was minded to pass into Achaia, the brethren [t]wrote to the disciples, urging them to receive him; who, when he had come, [u]contributed much to those who had through grace believed. For he entirely [v]confuted the Jews, [and that] publicly, showing through the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

s ch. 19. 4. *cf.* Heb. 6. 1-3.
t *cf.* Rom. 16. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 1-3.
u *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6.

cf. Rom. 12. 6-8; *cf.* Eph. 4. 11-13. v *cf.* ch. 6. 10; *cf.* ch. 17. 3.

though Christian, school of Origen. But if Philo were his master, Apollos had been led on beyond him by the voice of Israel's preacher of repentance and of Jesus also, as far as proclaimed by him. He knew no further, doctrinally, whatever he may have known as to the facts of His death and resurrection. The Christian gospel was to him unknown.

Yet what he knew he was zealous in making known, and with a wealth of proof from the Old Testament. Thus he began to speak boldly in the synagogue,—a remarkable case of faith manifesting itself amid many hindrances. How much perplexity for a man with but Jewish hopes, Messiah come and Israel not being gathered! a message broken off, without completion! When we remember John's own questioning from Herod's prison, how striking it is to find so long after a disciple of John with faith in the Messiah he had announced, who yet might seem to have disappeared without the accomplishment of what He came for! But his heart carried his faith through all these difficulties; and the voice that spoke at Ephesus did not falter in spite of all.

We can understand then the joy of heart in one so loyal to the truth when Aquila and Priscilla took him to them, and made known to him the truth which both removed his difficulties and perfected with more glorious hopes that which already so possessed his soul. Doubtless it brought for a time his testimony at Ephesus to a close, while the former teacher became once more a learner at the feet of Him whom his faith amid whatever obscurity had yet recognized and confessed; and it is no wonder if the large Christian assembly at Corinth abounding in gift and in such near connection with the commercial centre of Asia, attracted the eager disciple. There at any rate he soon desired to be, where his eagerness and boldness rapidly made him a leader and helper of those who were in Christ before him. Publicly and completely he confuted the unbelieving Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

The part taken by Priscilla, a woman, in this instruction given to Apollos, noted as it naturally has been and rightly, still deserves emphatic recognition. Did she go beyond her place? and does the prohibition of a woman's teaching by that Paul, one of whose company she had so long been, rebuke her conduct on this occasion? Nay, Paul it is who in naming these two whom he so highly valued, both in the comparatively early epistle to Rome, and in the later one to Timothy, puts Priscilla before Aquila. We may be sure that neither did she go beyond the place that God had given her, nor did the apostle mean to seal the lips of believing women, so that they should not help others with the truth they have received. On the contrary, the communication of that which one has received is as much the obligation of a woman as of a man. The knowledge of the truth is one of those various gifts of God which, according to the apostle's exhortation (1 Pet. iv. 10), brings under the responsibility of ministering it. Nay, if the heart be right with God, it must be so: the full spring must needs overflow; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must speak.

This does not constitute teaching in the forbidden sense, even where, as in this case, there is a distinct purpose to set forth the way of the Lord. It by no means necessarily involves the authority, publicity or place of the teacher, which few *men* have, whom no one would think of depriving of their undoubted right to speak of Christ to the utmost of their ability. Without being an evangelist, one may evangelize; and so, without being or claiming to be a teacher, one may

b (xix.1-7): The witness.

b And it came to pass while [w]Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the [x]upper districts, came to [y]Ephesus; and having found certain disciples, he said unto them, Did ye [z]receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?* And they said unto him, We did not even [a]hear if the Holy Spirit were [come]. And he said, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. And Paul said, John indeed baptized with a [b]baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who was [c]coming after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were [d]baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had [e]laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they [f]spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

*Or, more literally, "believing, did ye receive the Holy Spirit?" There is no interval implied between believing and receiving the Spirit.

w ch. 18. 27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 12.
x *cf.* ch. 18. 23. *cf.* ch. 16. 6.
y *cf.* ch. 18. 19. *cf.* Eph. 1. 1.
z *cf.* ch. 1. 5.
a *cf.* Jno. 7. 39.
b *cf.* ch. 18. 25. *cf.* Lk. 3. 3.
c *cf.* Matt. 3. 11. *cf.* Jno. 1. 26-29.
d *cf.* ch. 2. 38.
e *cf.* ch. 8. 17. *ctr.* ch. 10 44-48. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.
f *cf.* ch. 2. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 10, 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 1, 2, etc.

set forth the truth as God has enabled to apprehend it; thus a woman also without getting out of the place which the Creator has given to the woman.

We shall find the suited place to speak fully of this elsewhere; and what one would rather press here, and what needs much to be pressed, is the example of this noble woman in seeking to make another partake in that which had filled her own soul with peace and happiness. How largely is it true of men even, and much more of women, that the idea of having no responsibility in the matter of instructing others becomes an excuse for little regard to be instructed themselves, in any full and accurate way, in truths which are for all, and for one as much as another! It is conceded that it would be a shame for the teacher not to be taught; but they are not teachers; therefore they need not be accurately taught! But really it cannot be maintained that fulness or accuracy should be required of the teacher, if it is little matter in regard to those taught by him. As a teacher, what can one want which he does not need to teach? Have not all Christians need of all Christian truth? Alas, it is carelessness of heart that pleads so, whether in man or woman; and thus it is that, when Satan would bring in falsehood under some plausible disguise, the mass of Christians themselves are so slow to recognize it, if they recognize it at all; thus it is that, with all our vaunting of an open Bible, the Bible is yet but little really open to us! With all its fulness for us, it is as to practical possession but a thing of shreds and tatters! And again, if uneducated teachers make uneducated disciples, the converse is also true, and unteachable disciples soon and of necessity make unskilled teachers. Why should they be skilled in that which their hearers have no heart to learn? And thus the wheel turns along a sharp decline!

b The case of Apollos is followed—and surely with meaning in the connection—by that of other disciples of John; but who plainly were not companions, still less equals of Apollos. By the latter Jesus was known, however imperfectly, but the twelve soon after found by the apostle have to learn the testimony which John bore to Jesus. Of the coming of the Spirit they have, of course, not heard; and that is the purport of their answer to the question put: they do not speak of the *existence* of the Spirit, but of His being on earth,—of the baptism of the Spirit being an actual accomplishment. But this with Jews, from Pentecost and on, had followed their baptism to the Name of Jesus; Paul therefore asks to what then they had been baptized; and Jesus being declared to them, they are baptized to His Name. Even then it is only upon the apostle's hands being laid upon them that the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they speak with tongues and prophesy. Thus what Peter and John did at Samaria the apostle

2 (8-10): Separation and increase.

3 (11-20): Signs.

2 And he entered into the *g* synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading [as to] the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were *h* hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them, and *i* separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this took place for *j* two years, so that all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

3 And God wrought *k* extraordinary works of power by the hands of Paul, so that even napkins* or aprons were brought from contact with him,† [and put] upon the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out. And certain also of the strolling Jewish *l* exorcists took in hand to name, over those who had evil spirits, the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were

g ch. 13. 5.

h *cf.* ch. 13. 45, 46. *cf.* ch.7. 51. *cf.* Rom.11. 7-10.

i *cf.* ch. 18. 6, 7. *cf.* Heb. 13. 10-13.

j *cf.*ch.18.11.

k *cf.*ch. 5.15, 16. *cf.*Matt.14. 36 with Jno. 14. 12.

l *cf.*ch. 13. 8. *cf.* ch. 8. 9. *cf.*Matt.12. 24.

* Σουδάρια—"sweat cloths." † Literally, "from his skin."

of the Gentiles does now in regard to Jews. Israel seems to be at a greater distance than formerly from God, and authority is not recognized in Jerusalem, but as connected with one whose testimony Israel will not receive, but who has been sent by the Lord from heaven, with a heavenly testimony which Israel has never had made to them. Power is in the Risen Jesus, and is actualized for men in the Spirit His Witness. The prophesying reminds us of the new intercourse with God, and the tongues of a gospel for the nations round.*

2 In suited connection with this, we now find separation taking place between the Christian assembly and the unbelieving Jews. The apostle continues his labor in the school of a Greek, Tyrannus. God in absolute sovereignty, in a way which to the Jew might be in disrepute, but which was forced upon Him by their sin, while it was in fact the sovereignty of grace to sinners, is taking His place among the Gentiles. Thence the Word goes freely forth, so that all in Asia hear it, the word of the rejected Lord,—both Jews and Greeks. The position of the assembly is clearly defined, and there is a wide and fruitful testimony.†

3 The power of God is now manifested in an extraordinary manner in connection with Paul, the minister of this new and heavenly grace, so that napkins (or sweat-cloths) and aprons from his skin—both the signs of a toil which sin has necessitated—not only healed disease but expelled demons from the possessed. So has love's labor wrought through Him who came under the penalty of sin to heal spiritual disease and destroy the power of Satan. So manifest was the power of the Name of Jesus that certain wandering Jews, exorcists, undertook to use it as a charm, to conjure with. Seven sons of a Jewish high-priest, named Sceva (or Skeua, "implement, instrument"?) did this, but with a result for them as unfortunate as unforeseen. "Jesus I know," answered the demon, "and Paul I am acquainted with; but who are ye?" And the demoniac fell

* This is the only case of re-baptism mentioned in the New Testament, and it is interesting to note the reason. It was because they had only received the baptism of John, unto repentance, and not that which confessed Jesus Christ. Doubtless John's baptism, as all other, was by immersion, but the stress here is laid not upon the form—important as it is to be obedient in all things—but upon the Name of our Lord Jesus. There is doubtless instruction in this.

This instance also illustrates the indissoluble connection between faith in Christ and sealing with the Spirit, for doubtless they were both sealed individually and baptized corporately by the gift of the Holy Spirit. But there must be faith, and only that, if there is to be sealing. S. R.

† The name Tyrannus, "a sovereign ruler," seems to emphasize this thought. All things are in God's hands, and never more so than when the doors are apparently closed.—S. R.

certain men, the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high [m]priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I [n]know, and Paul I am acquainted with; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped upon them, and [o]mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house, naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who dwelt at Ephesus, and [p]fear fell upon all of them, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many too of those who had believed came [q]confessing and declaring their deeds. And not a few of those who practised curious arts brought their books and [r]burned them before all; and they reckoned the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.* So [s]mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

2 (21-41): Opposition.

2. Now when these things were fulfilled, Paul [t]purposed in his spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia

*Calculated at from about $7,500 to $10,000.

m *ctr.* Is. 52. 11. *ctr.* Lev. 21. 1, etc. *cf.* Jer. 5. 31.
n *cf.* Mk. 1. 23, 24. *cf.* Jas. 2. 19. *cf.* ch. 16. 16-18.
o *cf.* Lk. 11. 21, 22. *ctr.* 1 Jno. 4. 4.
p *cf.* ch. 5. 11.
q *cf.* Matt. 3. 6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 9.
r *cf.* Lev. 13. 57. *cf.* Jude 23.
s ch. 6. 7. ch. 12. 24. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 8, 9.
t ch. 20. 1. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 15–17.

upon them, mastered and drove them, naked and wounded, from the house.* Thus a startling witness from another side caused fear to fall upon all who dwelt at Ephesus. The effect was great in the confession and abjuring of their magic arts on the part of numbers who brought and publicly burned their books. "It was precisely in Ephesus that magic, strictly so called, held its seat. It had been originally connected with the worship of Artemis" (Lechler).†

Power, then, characterizes the work in Ephesus; and this, as already said, is in close relation to the view of the assembly in its responsibility which is here depicted. Ephesus means probably "desirable," and as the object of Christ's affection the assembly cannot lack on His side. Power cannot be wanting to it, if it is not wanting to itself. Evil from without cannot prevail against it, except it withdraw itself from the security of the divine shield. It is the ransomed and redeemed of Him who is gone up on high, having led captivity captive, and spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in His Cross. "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" Alas, is this Ephesus, thus defended, thus endowed, still to illustrate the mutability of man in all that has been intrusted to him? is it to furnish after all the most signal illustration of the warning, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

2. The apostle's labors are near their close at Ephesus, and he has in mind another visit to Macedonia and Achaia, before once more his longing heart carries him again to Jerusalem. After that he says, he must see Rome; and he was indeed to see it, but under what different circumstances from what he could

*It is striking that we have three Jewish sorcerers who came in contact with the gospel—Simon at Samaria, Elymas in Cyprus and these sons of Sceva. Simon professed Christianity, but showed his unregenerate heart by desiring to purchase the power of bestowing the gift of God. He seems to stand for professing Judaism which for gain would take the name of Christ, and then lapse. Bar-Jesus always opposed, yet with a name suggestive of that imitation of truth which is so common. He seems to stand for the whole nation upon whom judicial blindness has fallen. The sons of Sceva would imitate a power to which they were strangers. We cannot help remembering how the "false prophet" in the last days will perform lying wonders, and meet a more awful doom than these.—S. R.

† The magic and curious arts here spoken of cannot but suggest to the thoughtful mind that which finds frequent mention, not only in the Old Testament but the New. It is the habit of the day to speak with contempt of sorcery and witchcraft, as mere chicanery. But Scripture speaks of them as satanic. Without doubt it is part of the enemy's way to hide his hand, but faith should see with Scripture, nor confine demon possession, sorcery and magic to apostolic times merely. There is no question that they exist now under the forms of spiritism, hypnotism and other "curious arts."—S. R.

and Achaia, to proceed to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see [u]Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of those who [v]ministered unto him, [w]Timotheus and [x]Erastus, he remained himself awhile in Asia. And at that time there took place no small disturbance about the [y]way. For a certain man, by name Demetrius, a silver-beater, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans; whom he gathered together, with those who wrought in such things, and said, Men, ye know that from this [z]trade come our means; and ye see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away a large number, saying that they are [a]no gods which are made with hands. Now not only is there danger for us that this trade come into disrepute, but also that the [b]temple of the great goddess Artemis be counted for nothing, and that she may be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the habitable earth worshipeth. And when they heard this, they were filled with rage, and all cried out, saying, [c]Great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized and carried with them [d]Gaius and [e]Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's fellow-travelers. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And some also of the Asiarchs* who were his friends, sent to him and

u *cf.* Rom. 15. 22-29. *cf.* Rom. 1. 13.
v *cf.* ch. 13.5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 10.
w 1 Tim. 1.2
x *cf.* Rom. 16. 23. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 20.
y ch. 9. 2. ver. 9.
z *cf.* ch. 16. 16, 19.
a ch. 17. 29. *cf.* Rev. 13. 14, 15.
b *cf.* vers. 35, 37. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.
c ver. 34. *cf.* ch. 8. 10. *ctr.* ch. 14. 11-18.
d *cf.* ch. 20. 4
e ch. 20. 4. ch. 27. 2. *cf.* Col. 4. 10

*Officers elected by the cities who at their own expense furnished festivals in honor of the gods.

have imagined now. How little he could have anticipated those years in prison, cut off from the work he loved, and then as a prisoner to see Rome also! It was a foreshadow doubtless of what awaited his gospel from legal opposition, and then from the world-power, with which in this respect it was allied. For himself we have already seen how he had been warned of the uselessness of his efforts in behalf of his misguided countrymen, and how he had been turned back on his last attempt to reach them, from the city itself, without anything attained. This time we know that he goes back as the bearer of a large offering from the Gentile Christians to the assemblies of Judea, which was to be an acknowledgement of the great debt they owed them, and a help to greater oneness of feeling between them. Yet was every fresh success among the Gentiles, accompanied as it was by a fresh manifestation of hostility on the part of the unbelieving Jews, increasing the bitterness of national enmity against himself, and the danger to himself at every return among them. Danger to himself was indeed never a deterrent: he was "ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Chap. xxi. 13). But would that sacrifice avail? and what of the growing work in those fields afar off, to which with the distinct warning that Israel would not receive his testimony, he had been expressly sent?

It is noteworthy how the claims of the Gentile assemblies are pressed upon him at this time. Of the state of the large assembly at Corinth he hears just at this time; the fruit of this for us we have through the overruling hand of God in those two epistles in which the dangers of the Church in the world its opposite are so vividly pictured for us. After this the conflict with Judaism in Galatia

[f] urged him not to present himself in the theatre. Different persons then kept crying out different things; for the assembly was confused; and the most knew not why they had come together. But from among the crowd they put forward [g] Alexander, the Jews thrusting him forward. And Alexander, beckoning with his hand, would have made plea to the people; but when they came to know that he was a Jew, one cry arose from all, crying out for about two hours, [h] Great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And when the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he said, Ephesians, what man is there then, who does not know that the [i] city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Artemis, and of the [image] that [j] fell down from heaven?* These things therefore being beyond contradiction, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rash. For ye have brought these men, who are [k] neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If indeed then Demetrius and the artisans with him have matter against any, [l] court-days are going on, and there are proconsuls: let them prosecute one another; and if ye make inquiry

*Zeus (Jupiter). This entire clause is one word, "the Zeus-fallen."

[f] *cf.* ch. 21. 4, 12-14.
[g] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 14.
[h] ver. 28.
[i] *cf.* ch. 17. 21.
[j] *cf.* ch. 14. 12. *cf.* Rev. 12. 7-9.
[k] *cf.* Rom. 2. 22. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9 with 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.
[l] *cf.* ch. 18. 12-17. *cf.* ch. 25. 10-12.

calls forth the letter in which he sharply defines the contrast between the principles of law and grace. The epistle to the Romans either before or after this, written in view of the hindrances he had found to coming to them, lays down for them and for us the great foundations of Christian position, and explains the grafting of Gentiles into the good olive in place of the Jewish branches broken off through unbelief. The state of Corinth probably delays him now, while sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, and now suddenly there breaks out at Ephesus a tumult of opposition against him which threatens even life.

The history of this outbreak shows us the power of the prince of this world sustained by the worldly interests which love to shelter themselves under the cover of religion. A religion men must have; yet how thin a varnish of it will suffice for the crowd, while the crowd again will suffice for the religion. What an absurd thing to deny what all Asia and the world worship! Really men believe in men: and though you may think of the individuals what you please, the mass must be judged differently. Thus it can come to be heresy that they are no gods who are made with hands; and the town clerk can shame a multitude out of treating it seriously. This, though Demetrius and his fellows are keener sighted through their nearer concern in what affects their craft, and this is the first and inciting argument; though all can feel that they gain in greatness from their magnificent goddess, and their pride can work alongside of their grosser interests. In fact the cry that unites the mob is "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" though, when they come together, it is hard to translate this into an intelligible expression. Alexander the Jew (perhaps the coppersmith of whom Paul speaks elsewhere) cannot for that reason head the crowd against the refusers of idolatry, and confusion reigns; until the townclerk with his wonder at what is not in question, and his plea for men who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers, backed by the suggestion of Rome's strong way of suppressing a riot, brings in order and dismisses the crowd. Paul is kept out of the way, even by the kindly advice of some of those in high place among the religious functionaries, who realize the nature of what has called the assemblage together. And indeed conscience is not in the crowd but in the individual; the Lord, as

concerning other things, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. For indeed we are in danger of being [m]accused for this day's riot, there being no cause in view of which we can give a reason for this concourse. And having said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

3 (xx.1-12): The return, the remembrance, and the revival.

3. Now after the uproar had ceased, Paul, having called the disciples to him, and [n]exhorted them, bade them farewell, and went away, to go into [o]Macedonia. And having gone through those parts, and exhorted them

m *cf.* ch. 21. 31, 32.

n *cf.* ch. 16. 40.

o ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch. 16. 9, 10.

we remember, had often to scatter the crowds; Paul recognizes that he has no place here, and escapes their hands.

Such is the world into which Christianity has come—a kingdom of truth appealing to the true, claiming obedience at all personal cost, prostrating all idolatry before the ark of God. Outwardly its aspect may be greatly changed, but its features still remain, and the inevitable conflict. "All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but are of the world." And again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

3. The journey of the apostle through Macedonia and Achaia, with all its interest for us, is passed over in the briefest way. How much would we fain have known of Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea, of Athens and of Corinth! but Scripture approves itself in all this most unlike mere human history. After Paul's leaving Ephesus, a few words suffice for the journey through Macedonia, in which we have not even the names of the places he visited, or the time spent. In Greece (Achaia) not even Corinth is mentioned, although we are told that he was there three months. Then the machinations of the Jews, his constant enemies, decide him to return by way of Macedonia, and we are told the names of his companions,* more numerous than usual, who accompany him back to Asia; that they went before, however, from Philippi to Troas, waiting for him there. At Philippi, as we discern once more by the change of pronoun, Luke joins him once again, after an interval of between six and seven years, and sailing from Philippi, they come in five days to Troas.

Seven days are spent at Troas, and terminate with the first day of the week, on which we find the disciples gathered together to break bread, and Paul, ready to depart on the morrow, pours out his heart to them till midnight. It is surely not, as some would have us consider it, an ordinary meal at which they gather, which would deprive the time specified of all its significance, and indeed the breaking of bread itself. On the other hand, with the first day of the week, the resurrection day, there are connected how many joyful and tender memories for the Christian heart! The seventh day rest of the old creation has now given place to that which speaks of a new beginning out of death, death itself yielding to life which has death behind it, and is a life eternal. Instead of a rest when the week of labor is over, it is a rest beginning and characterizing the blessedness it ushers in. The legal principle, "do and live," is exchanged in it for the evangelical one, "live and do." The seventh day is a command; the first day is a day of privilege; and how significant it is that, whereas in the Old

* There are seven of these companions, all of whose names occur elsewhere. The meanings are mostly plain, whether we can give the interpretation or not. 1. Sopater, "The Father the Saviour." No doubt an abbreviated form of Sosipater (Rom. xvi. 21). He was from Beroea, where, more noble than those of Thessalonica, they searched the scriptures. He was the son of Pyrrhus, "the fiery or ardent,"—a good companion in service. 2. Aristarchus, "the best ruler." 3. Secundus, "the second or assistant." These two were from Thessalonica. 4. Gaius, "pertaining to the land, or earth." He was from Derbe and not the Macedonian mentioned in chap xix. 29. We do not know which is the "mine host" of Rom. xvi. 23, and of John's third epistle. 5. Timothy, "one who honors God," well known from the two epistles addressed to him. 6. Tychicus, "fortunate," similar to Eutychus in this same chapter. He was frequently sent on errands by Paul. 7. Trophimus, "nourished." He was a Gentile apparently, and both he and Tychicus were from Asia. Nothing special is said of him except that he was left at Miletus sick (2 Tim. iv. 20).—S. R.

with much discourse, he came into [p]Greece. And having spent three months [there], and a [q]plot being laid against him by the Jews when he was about to sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him as far as Asia [r]Sopater, a Berean, [son of] Pyrrhus; and of Thessalonians [s]Aristarchus and Secundus; and [t]Gaius of Derbe and [u]Timotheus; and of Asia [v]Tychicus and [w]Trophimus. These going before waited for us in Troas; and we sailed away from Philippi after the [x]days of unleavened bread, and came to them in [y]five days to Troas, where we tarried seven days.

p *cf.* ch. 17. 15. *cf.* ch. 18. 1.
q ver. 19. *cf.* ch. 9. 23. *cf.* ch. 23. 12. *cf.* ch. 25. 3. *cf* 2 Cor. 11. 26.
r *cf.* Rom. 16. 21.
s *cf.* ch. 19. 29.
t *cf.* Rom. 16 23. *cf* 3 Jno. 1.
u ch. 19. 22.
v Eph. 6. 21. Col. 4. 7, 8. 2 Tim. 4. 12. Tit. 3. 12.
w ch. 21. 29; 2 Tim. 4. 20.
x ch. 12. 3; *cf.* ch. 18. 18.
y *ctr.* ch. 16. 11.

Testament prophets the observance of the sabbath is again and again urged upon the people as a condition of blessing, in the New Testament epistles it is only once mentioned, and that to say, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Col. ii. 16). The things with which it is classed are a convincing testimony of how it is regarded.

The breaking of bread was that for which the believers at Troas were assembled, and not even to hear the apostle, great as the privilege of this might be. The language implies that this was an ordinary meeting to remember the Lord in His death, at which the apostle took occasion to address them. Upon the Lord's day they observed the Lord's Supper. The day is evidently what is styled this in the book of Revelation (chap. i. 10), which is not the prophetic "day of the Lord," for this could not be applied at any rate to the first three chapters there; besides which it is another expression, literally "the Dominical day," as the Supper is (1 Cor. xi. 20) "the Dominical Supper." What day but the first day of the week has the Lord stamped as His? the day hallowed by His appearance as risen in the assembly of His disciples; the day in which He hailed them as His brethren, and breathed on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. That first day made Him their Lord in a glory unknown hitherto; and that title, "the Lord's day," conveys to us the very essence of its blessedness. He who was under death is victorious over it; He who was under our sins is risen for ever free; and when Thomas is bidden to reach out his hand and put it into His side, the glad cry of his heart in response is "My Lord and my God!"

Fit it is, then, that the Lord's Supper should go with the Lord's day; with the feast of Resurrection, the joy of the Remembrance. The death which He has left behind we cannot leave behind: His resurrection glorifies and does not efface it; the myrrh and aloes perfume His garments still (Ps. xlv. 8; Jno. xix. 39, 40). Up in the glory of heaven He is seen by the hearts of His redeemed as a "Lamb slain" still (Rev. v. 6).

How much depends upon our remembrance here! How suited a time for the departing apostle to address his farewell words to those he is of necessity leaving to bear their own burden of responsibility as the purchased of the precious blood of Christ! Upon the fulness and constancy of this remembrance rests all the hope of the future of the Church as His witness upon earth until He comes. In the joy of resurrection to show forth His death,—that is the responsibility; to realize this is to find power to sustain it. Upon such a fruitful theme no wonder that the apostle should prolong his speech till midnight, and beyond. But at midnight it is that a significant event occurs. In the upper room in which he is speaking, lighted up with many lights, but in a window looking out into the darkness, Eutychus, the "prosperous," sleeps, as in such places of outlook prosperity can induce sleep, soothed, alas, by words that once had interest, but out of which the meaning has now died. So sleeping, he falls out of the window to the ground, and is taken up dead. Until this word, we might easily

And the [z]first day of the week, we being assembled to [a]break bread, Paul discoursed to them, being about to depart on the morrow, and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many [b]lights in the [c]upper room, where we were assembled. And a certain youth, by name Eutychus, sat in the [d]window, overpowered with deep [e]sleep; and as Paul was discoursing still more, he fell overpowered by the sleep down from the third story, and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and [f]fell upon him, and embracing him, said, Be not troubled, for his life is in him. And having gone up, and broken the bread, and [g]eaten, and conversed with them a long while till day-break, so he departed. And they brought the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

z *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 2. *cf.* Rev. 1. 10.
a *cf.* Matt. 26. 26-28. *cf.* ch. 2.42. *cf.*1 Cor.11. 23-33.
b *cf.* Eph. 5. 8.
c ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Col. 3.1.
d *ctr.* Jno. 20. 19. *cf.*2 Sa.11.2.
e *cf.*1 Thess. 5. 6. *cf.* Eph.5. 14.
f *cf.* 1 Ki.17. 21, 22. *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 34, 35.
cf. ch. 9.40, 41. g *cf.* ch. 27. 33-36.

take all this, (however literally a fact, as none will question,) to be yet an allegorical description of a soul's decline and fall from truth once really and savingly known. The lighted room in the midst of surrounding darkness, the windows, avenues into the darkness of the outside world, the youth even of the sleeper (it is to the young man that John speaks specifically when he says, "Love not the world"), his very name, Eutychus, pointing out the seduction of prosperity, the consequent sleep in this place of peril, which in fact leads to his fall,—all this reads with perfect consistency, and there would seem no difficulty in understanding the warning conveyed, until we hear this last word, "taken up *dead*," while he that believeth on Christ can never die. Yet here an exceptional word is spoken,—a word that we hear nowhere uttered as to a dead man. The apostle goes down, and falling upon him, and embracing him, says, "Be not troubled, for his life is in him." But one with his life in him is not what we would ordinarily call dead. Does this then simply speak of life now restored by the power of God which has wrought through Paul? I own that this is what one would naturally think; and in this case an interpretation of it in the way suggested is not to be thought of. We must then accept the modification that it represents the lapse of one not savingly, but only superficially impressed; and we might think of such as are, in Jude's strong language, "*twice* dead,"—dead in nature, and now dead by apostasy. Such a warning would be indeed awfully solemn; but in the case of which Jude speaks he does not seem to intimate any possibility of recovery such as we see in Eutychus. Doubtless there are different grades, however, of cases seemingly the same; and here we might leave it.

But there are those who attribute a different meaning to the apostle's words: "Eutychus pays the penalty of his inattention; but God bears testimony to His own goodness, and to the power with which he had endued the apostle, by raising him from a state of death. Paul says that his soul was yet (?) in him: he had only to renew the connection between it and his physical organization. In other cases the soul had been recalled." Another says, "Assuredly the apostle in these words had no desire to make light of the power of God which had wrought in this miracle. It may be well to compare with this Luke viii. 49–56, where the spirit of the Jewish maiden had departed. But the Lord's words were enough; and 'her spirit returned.' Here it was not so: 'his soul is in him,' says the apostle, though divine power alone could retain it, or hinder the proximate break-up."

If this be really what is meant, we have a death which, as far as man is concerned, is truly that,—the one in it outside of all human help, or even accessibility to any mode of appeal that can be made. Is it not possible also for a true child of God to get into a condition resembling this? as far as man is concerned

4 (13-38): Departure, and testing fore-warned.

4. But we, having gone before on board ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul; for so had he directed, himself being about to [h]go on foot. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him up, and came to Mitylene. And having sailed thence on the morrow, we arrived over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and having* remained at Trogyllium, the next day we came to [i]Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not be made to [j]spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of [k]Pentecost.

h *cf.* Matt. 26. 36.

i *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 20.

j *cf.* ch. 18. 20.

k ch. 2. 1. *cf.* ch. 19. 21. *cf.* Gal. 4. 10, 11.

* Many omit this clause.

inaccessible; the truth itself known in such sort that it has power no longer? nothing remaining capable of penetrating the hardened conscience, or of rousing any longer the insensible heart? How terrible may be the effect upon men in this way of truth heard, it may be, long, but not yielded to, or no longer so, but met with a resistance continued until it has stiffened into indifference? the speaker becoming perhaps "as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument" (Ezek. xxxiii. 32), or soothing the hearer in his dangerous sleep!

Some lesson such as that which has been indicated, the story of Eutychus must surely yield. We are here amid intimations of the present time, when the Church, bereft of her first human guardians, would have to work out her own salvation in a world opposed to Christ; and in which, as we shall shortly have plainly declared, the enemy would have in the meantime only too much success both in alluring and worrying the sheep of Christ. The Spirit indeed would not depart; and in the faithfulness and love of God there would always be refuge and unfailing blessing for His own. But the source of worse danger they carry ever with them, an evil heart of unbelief ready to turn them aside to seek other help than in the Only and All-powerful Helper. Thus declension and revival have marked the Church's history upon earth; the mercy of God raising up deliverers in those who sought fully to follow in the path of faith, while the mass dragging behind would limit and enfeeble the deliverance. In Paul here we may see the special power of one who wrought with God to revive the dead, and relieve for a time the distress; but the vessels of this power depart, and those who have rejoiced in it but had it not are left once more to face their own responsibility with their feebleness to meet it. The apostle in the consciousness of such a condition of things ensuing, himself sustained* by the refreshment of that which is the means of communion to the whole company, spends the whole night in converse with them till the day breaks, and at the day-dawn departs.

4. To Assos, where his companions proceed on shipboard, Paul goes alone on foot! It is probable enough that at this moment solitude was more congenial to him than companionship, even with those so spiritually akin as were his companions at this time. The future of that Church, so dear to him as the Church of Christ, was, as we know by what follows, upon his heart. He was the man of all on earth upon whom this burden rested (2 Cor. xi. 28, 29). None knew as well, perhaps, as he, upon Whose shoulders of strength the graven names are; yet that did not hinder the employment of his heart with those for whom the heart of Christ was employed, but gave depth to it. There were personal causes of thought also, although not separate from the Church's need, in whose serv-

* I do not doubt that it is the bread which they have broken at the Lord's Supper, which he now breaks for his own support (a connection which has great significance), and that this is not the Supper itself. As others have remarked, the action here is confined to himself, and the word "eaten" added, which is literally "tasted," is more suited to this.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the [l]elders of the assembly. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know how, from the first day on which I set foot in Asia, I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all [m]lowliness of mind, and with tears, and in trials which befell me by the [n]plots of the Jews; how I [o]kept back nothing of what was profitable, so as not to announce it to you, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks [p]repentance towards God, and [q]faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* And

* Some omit "Christ."

l *cf.* ch.14.23. *cf.* ver. 28. *cf.* 1 Tim.3. 1-7.
m *cf.* 1 Thes. 2. 1, 6, 7. *cf.* 1Cor.2.3. *cf.* 2 Cor.4.5.
n *cf.* ver. 3.
o *cf.* ver. 31. *cf.* 2 Tim.4. 2.
p *cf.* ch.2.38. *cf.* ch.17.30. *cf.* Gal.3.22.
q *cf.* ch. 16. 31. *cf.* Rom.10. 8-13. *cf.* Gal.2.16.

ice his life was spent. He was going to Jerusalem; place of so many memories, and perhaps of his most real conflict. What waited him there? what lay beyond this? would it affect his after-course? would it alter those visions of future service which did not stop short of the furthest bounds of the west? Doubtless he had occupation enough with thoughts that thronged him those twenty-five miles or so to Assos. There they took him up, and thence they sailed, passing by Ephesus, which with all his ties to it would detain him too long if he visited it now, and only briefly pausing at Miletus.

But Ephesus could not be left aside with no token of his ever-abiding love; and the stay at Miletus gives him his desired opportunity. It was but thirty miles away, and a good road connecting; "he sent and called to him the elders of the assembly," for his last tender greeting.

The address of the apostle to the elders here is clearly in accordance with what has been already said of the representative character of the assembly at Ephesus. We have nothing like it elsewhere; and it ends in fact Paul's ministry of active labor as far as the only inspired account given us depicts it. From Jerusalem a new kind of testimony begins, and if he were freed from his chain at Rome, and permitted to carry out his thought of going on to Spain, yet nothing of this comes into or is needed for the completion of the history,—for the divine purpose with which it has been given us. A divine history is no mere account of things in detail; it is much more than this: it is a specially arranged extract from the whole, to prevent our losing ourselves in the many details, and to guide us to a proper estimate of the whole; it is at once a history and a comment which the history itself furnishes.

According to the divine thought, then, the evangelization of the Gentiles is here complete: we stand at the end and look back upon it; and with the review can look on also to see the result of it all, as thus complete. Moreover, in the review of the work of such an one as Paul we get a clearer apprehension spiritually of these results than if we had a wider field and many workmen. Then we should have a complicated problem to work out—to estimate the laborers and their labors separately and together, and to distinguish what might be due to each. Now on the other hand, we have one pattern workman, and we can certainly anticipate no better results from any other, nor from any number of others; we have the whole matter resolved for us with the greatest simplicity that can be.

An unalterably solemn thing it is, to look at it so; and a comparison made outside the history of the Acts will only confirm it. Where was there a place more competent as an example than the great assembly at Corinth, "coming behind in no gift;" the fruit of the apostle's careful labors for a year and a half; in how short a time does the first epistle, written from Ephesus during his work there, show us results such as we need not be reminded of; the Spirit of God, by the hand of Paul himself, has given it in detail. Look at Galatia with its zeal and enthusiasm for him who had brought it the gospel of Christ; in still less

now, behold, I go [r]bound in spirit to Jerusalem, [s]not knowing the things that I shall meet with in it, save that the [t]Holy Spirit testifieth to me city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I hold not my life of any account as [u]precious to myself, so that I may accomplish my [v]course, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to [w]testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that all ye among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom [of God]* will [x]see my face no more.

*Many omit.

r *cf.* ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch.21.13.
s *cf.* Heb.11. 8.
t *cf.* ch. 21.4, 11. *cf.* ch. 8.29. *cf.*ch.16.6,7.
u *cf.* Phil. 3. 7–10. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21.
v *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14. *cf.* 2 Tim.4. 7, 8.
w ver. 21.
cf. Rom. 1. 1; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16. x ver. 38; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 6.

time from that of his second visit swept by the chilling blasts of legality, and giving up the joyous Spirit of adoption for the spirit of bondage. Compared with these Paul's declaration as to Ephesus is moderate indeed.

At the outset he reminds them of the character of his life and service among them, so well known during the long time he had spent there. His service now ended, he can speak of it with frankness and simplicity of heart to those who would need to serve with the same lowliness, compassed with the same perils. In his ministry there had been no reserve—no keeping back of anything that would be profitable, in a service which was not only public and general, but individual and from house to house. The basis of all was that which went out in testimony to Jews and Greeks,—repentance towards God, that judgment of self in His Presence which sets aside self-righteousness and self-confidence of every kind, and thus also that seeking after one's own will and way which is the essence of sin; on the other hand, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, which alone gives God to be known and joyed in, and thus links the soul to Him from whom it can no more be sundered. These two things, it is evident, are but different parts of the one great whole of conversion, and which cannot exist apart from one another. One cannot exist, therefore, *before* the other, and they exercise a reciprocal influence upon each other. True repentance is as evangelical as true faith; and true faith as practical as true repentance. And the relation of each to a man's works is strangely in contrast with the usual thoughts; for while *faith* it is that is the worker, insomuch that "faith, if it have not works, is dead" faith merely, *repentance* it is that turns from all doings of man as wherein to have confidence, abhorring *self*, not sin merely, as the best man on earth was taught to do (Job xlii. 6). But thus the two clasp hands and walk together.

On such a basis, then, has his work been: but he is now leaving it; as far as they are concerned, it is for ever,—they will see his face no more. For himself, he is going to Jerusalem, bound in spirit—surely not the Holy Spirit, to whom the term he uses would be quite inapplicable, nor does it speak of the sweet and happy constraint of love, though love is in it—deep and constraining love; but along with this is certainly a foreboding which casts a shadow over him; the word "bound" reminds one of the victim for the altar; yet, if it were only that, and he felt the Lord were leading him in this way, his spirit would be brighter: his *spirit* would not bind him, though men's hands might. Contrast his words to the Philippians, where he is contemplating such a possibility: "Yea, and if I be offered"—"poured out" rather, the figure being taken from the drink-offering, which was a symbol of joy; and thus he goes on,—"and if I be poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Phil. ii. 17). Again, when in nearer view of the end:—"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will

Wherefore I testify to you this day that I am [y] pure from the blood of all; for I have not shrunk from announcing to you [z] all the counsel of God. [a] Take heed * to yourselves and to all the [b] flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you [c] overseers, to tend the assembly of God, which he [d] purchased with the blood of his own.† [For] I know [this], that [e] after my departure there will come in among you grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; also from [f] among your own selves shall men rise up, speaking things perverted, to draw away the [g] disciples after them. Wherefore [h] watch, remembering that for three years I ceased not night and day to [i] admonish each one [of you] with tears.

y *cf.* ch. 18. 6. *cf.* Ezek. 33. 1-9.
z *cf.* Jer. 26. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 11, 12.
a *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 6, 16. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 10.
b *cf.* Jno. 10. 16. *cf.* Jno. 21. 15–17. *cf.* Col. 1. 24, 25.
c *cf.* Phil. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24.
d *cf.* Eph. 5. 25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *cf.* Matt. 13. 45, 46.

* Many add, "therefore."

† Or "the assembly of the Lord, which he purchased with blood that was his own." MSS. are nearly equally divided; and I am not satisfied that what I have given is the true reading. The plea that "church of the Lord" is found nowhere else may incline one the more to accept an unusual phrase; and "blood that was His own" would be in contrast with that "blood not his own" (Heb. ix. 25), with which the Jewish high priest entered the holiest.

cf. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. e *cf.* Phil. 2. 12; *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 1; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1 f *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 15; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10; *cf.* 3 Jno. 9, 10. g *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18. h *cf.* Matt. 24. 42; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 3-10. i *cf.* Col. 1. 28; *cf.* Phil. 3. 18, 19; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 4.

give me in that day" (2 Tim. iv. 6–8). The mere circumstances, therefore, will not explain the expression used by him now without a great wrong to the apostle himself; except indeed we take in the circumstances in a wider sense, beginning with his love to Israel; deep enough to have made him, as he declares to the Romans (and when this journey was in fact before him), be wishing that he himself were anathema from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 3); yet with those words in his ears,—how they must have remained in his ears!— "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me," how the longing desire of the heart may work round the plainest testimonies! and especially even when the love that creates it is one like this of the apostle, a divine love for the people of God; for a people whose history was the history of God's grace to men from times far off, and of whom the Lord Himself had said, "Salvation is of the Jews."

Here he was, then, with his offering from the Gentiles, hoping, as it would seem, that now at last he might find that restriction removed, and that He who had once sent him far off to the Gentiles, might now permit him a testimony that should be accepted at Jerusalem itself. And yet—and yet—an uncertainty seems to cling to it in his mind, and shadow the hope that would fain be confident. He *knows not* what is to befall him there. There was the general witness of the Spirit—no exceptional thing that—wherever clustered the abodes of men, there were the scenes of his trial, if of his triumphs,—bonds and afflictions awaited him. What wonder if they did so at Jerusalem? Would he shrink from it on that account? Did he value his life, in the accomplishment of his course,—of that ministry received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God?

In Ephesus, however, his work was done; with the whole counsel of God fully declared to them, he was clear from the blood of all. He addresses himself, therefore, to those to whom the Spirit had given a place of oversight in the assembly, to care for it and watch and warn as he had done, tending the flock as shepherds, in view of evils which he can already foresee, and which would require their utmost vigilance and care.

As others have said, it is plain that the apostle thinks of no successors to himself in apostolic power or place. It is the elders who are now to exercise oversight, and they are not apostles. We find by the Apocalyptic epistle to

And now I [j]commend you to God and the [k]word of his grace, which is able to [l]build [you] up, and to give [you] an [m]inheritance among them that are [n]sanctified. I have [o]coveted of none silver or gold or apparel; yourselves know that these [p]hands have ministered to my needs, and to those who were with me. In all things I have given you an [q]example that so laboring ye should sustain the weak, and to [r]remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

j ch. 14. 23. *cf.* Eph. 6. 23.
k cf. Col. 3. 16. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 14–17.
l cf. Col. 2. 7. *cf.* Col. 1. 10. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 18.
m ch. 26. 18. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4, 5. *n cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* Jno. 17. 17; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13. *o cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 5; *cf.* 1 Sa. 12. 3; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 2. *p* ch. 18. 3; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 14, 15; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 7–10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 9; *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 8. *q cf.* Phil. 3. 17; *cf.* Phil. 4. 9; *cf.* Gal. 6. 2, 10. *r cf.* Matt. 10. 8; *cf.* Jno. 4. 31–36.

Ephesus, that in fact just to that which, as has been already said, in a special way represents the Church at large there *did* come those who professed to be such successors: men who claimed to be apostles and were not, and whom they found liars (Rev. ii. 2). The Corinthians also are warned of *false* apostles (2 Cor. xi. 13), but nowhere are any exhorted to receive the *true*. This is marked and decisive as to those who make such claims to-day. It is remarkable indeed how ritualism has stultified itself in its successional pretensions, which always cleave to Peter, never to Paul: to the man, that is, who distinctly gave up the Gentiles to the care of Paul, himself going to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9). Who pretends, in fact, to be successor to Paul, who had the whole Gentile field committed to him? Or when did Paul confine himself to so narrow a field as that which the widest imaginable episcopal diocese would be to such an one (Rom. i. 13–15)? But in fact the *episcopi*—the bishops—are here in these elders (ver. 28, R. V.), who were simply the overseers of an assembly,—no one of them with diocese or parish or assembly of his own. We have seen such appointed in the Gentile assemblies by Paul and Barnabas on their first return journey through Lycaonia and Pisidia (chap. xiv. 23), and here we find them again in Ephesus. They are a company in each assembly of men fitted by their years, or that practical experience that should come through years, to take fatherly rule and oversight together. In this way they were to tend the flock as shepherds, but it by no means follows that this comprehends also the "nourishing and furnishing it with the wholesome food of the Word and all the means of grace," as Lechler alleges; here is not the place properly to discuss this; it is quite natural for those to think so who have been accustomed to see in the minister of the church the union of all the public "gifts" in the body of Christ. On the other hand it may be asserted without hesitation that the minister of a church, as almost everywhere found to-day, does not anywhere appear in the pages of the New Testament. The elders were a local board, as is plain; and by the very fact that they were "elders," though the word seems to have lost its meaning now, they could not include all ministry in the assembly; which the well-known text in the first epistle to Timothy (v. 17) confirms: elders might rule well, and yet not labor in the Word and doctrine; the one did not at all include the other.

Appointed by the apostle, as in the case before us compared with those already mentioned we cannot doubt they were, it could be said that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, and in the assembly of God which He had purchased with the blood of His own—of One in such endeared relation as Christ was. How great the responsibility, then, of such a charge! The more, because evil times were coming, and not far off, as "after my departure" would surely indicate. The conflict with evil in a world like this cannot be avoided; and God turns it to blessing, but does not keep His people from it. Have we not to maintain a similar struggle with an inward enemy also? And so as to the Church of God, it would not be persecution from the world that would be the only, or even the chief trial. Here too there would be internal strife: "I know," says

And having said these things, he [s]kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell upon Paul's neck, and [t]kissed him tenderly; sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they would [u]see his face no more. And they conducted him to the ship.

[s] ch. 21. 5.
[t] *cf.* Gal. 4. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 6.
[u] ver. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

the apostle, "that after my departure there will come in among you grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; also from among your own selves shall men rise up, speaking things perverted, to draw away the disciples after them." On the one hand, from without the evil would break in through the slackly-guarded gates: we see the possibility of this in Simon at Samaria; though there the power did not lack to detect and cast out what had gained admission. On the other hand, from within perversions of truth would come, men seeking to make of themselves a centre instead of Christ: the subtlest evil,—truth with a twist in it, so as in some sense to deceive the true. For, alas, how seldom are we absolutely and altogether such that error cannot appeal to us! Doubtless "he that will do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;" but who then can look round among the contradictory views that divide the sincerest Christians, without realizing how much our own wills must deceive us after all?

How solemn does this make the apostle's word to Timothy, "Take heed to *thyself* and to the doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 16); to thyself first! For Scripture itself will only furnish perfectly the man of God: and we may be earnest enough to learn just such and such things, and find no capacity, because of something we do *not* want to learn, which must be learned first! For this cause what we may be pleased to call our open Bible may be a Bible with few wide open pages. If we shut our eyes, we cannot dictate to them just what they shall shut out!

But if anything like this be true, then we must not wonder at the decline that seems ever ready to set in after the greatest of revivals. All truth makes demand proportionate to its blessedness, and thus the highest truth may be the first to be lost. It is a solemn thing indeed that, even amongst Christians, the doctrine of Paul is that least received, most carped at. How significant were the tears with which day and night he ceased not to admonish every one!

Therefore they were to watch; God and the word of His grace remained with them, and would remain: a sufficient resource surely, whatever the trial. It was able to build them up and give them an inheritance among the sanctified; it is able still to minister now to the soul a portion as large as ever. We have no limit except that which we make for ourselves; why make it?

Sustained by all this wealth of blessing, he could appeal to them that he had coveted nothing from them. His own hands had sufficed for his need, and even for that of others with him. He had given them an example of labor freely engaged in on behalf of the weak, and a fulfilment of the words of the Lord Jesus, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

He closes with a full heart, pouring out his prayers with them before he leaves them, with a burst of sorrowing love on their part at the close of a ministry to which they owed their all, henceforth a memory only, save in that one letter from the Roman prison in which he takes them and us up into the land where are no partings, and where the inheritance of them that are sanctified is spread before us and made our own. He had been already caught up there, to see things he could not communicate. In his captivity at Rome even he seems to have acquired a more penetrating apprehension of the things unseen, which he is able at the same time to communicate. May we have ability to receive these revelations which alone place us in the full height of our position as Christians, and thus give us the full length and breadth of what is through grace our own!

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. xxi.–xxviii.)
Into the Roman Prison.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xxi. 1–14.)
Forewarnings.

1 (1-6): The will of God.

1. AND when it came to pass that, having got away from them, we set sail, we came in a [v]straight course to Cos, and on the morrow to Rhodes, and thence to Patara. And having [w]found a ship crossing over to Phenicia, we went on board, and set sail; and having sighted Cyprus, and left it on the left hand, we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to discharge her cargo. And having found out the [z]disciples, we tarried there seven days; who [y]said to

v cf. ch. 16. 11.
w cf. ch. 27. 6.
x ctr. ch. 9. 2.
cf. ch. 20. 6.
y cf. ch. 20. 23.
cf. ver. 11.
cf. ch. 16. 6, 7.
cf. 1 Thess. 5. 19.

DIV. 4.

The last division of the Acts is plainly of a very different character from those before it. The progress of the gospel is over; the chief evangelist, the apostle to whom is committed the whole Gentile field, is shut up in prison, not (as far as the history given to us goes) to escape from it again, whatever partial relief might be obtained. Rome, the capital of the world, shows herself, only less bitterly, alas, than Israel, the enemy of God and of His grace. The word of God is indeed not bound; it is His word who is over all, and who is with it; but its ministers are confessors, and its witnesses are martyrs. There is no conversion of the world, nor does it change its prince; and it is prophetic of the future of Christendom itself the welcome that Rome extends to Paul and to his gospel, the fullest chords of whose music sound from the place of his captivity.

It should not be strange to find therefore, in the whole narrative before us now, the prophetic character (which indeed underlies all Scripture history) becoming very manifest. The broad features are of the clearest, although details may be often hard to read. Legalism has been all through, and not simply at the beginning, more than the profane world itself, the enemy of the gospel, and the inspiration of the world in its attacks upon it. Rome has been judaized, never truly Christianized; and judaized Rome has had more martyrs than Pagan Rome ever had. Babylon the Great is the false woman on the wild beast's back,—the seven-hilled city in her "mystery" phase. But it is enough here to indicate in general terms what is before us; the details will develop as we proceed.

SUBD. 1.

Not without full warning does the apostle come into soldier's chain. God utters His voice with absolute plainness, and it is not due to any lack in this respect that the disaster happens which occupies so many pages of the Acts. We see here a reason why it could not be in its totality the Acts of Jesus; why the Acts of the apostles do not fully represent these. The voice of the Lord is heard now in protest against the act of one of His most devoted servants; even although that act itself is one of complete self-sacrifice, and although it is permitted for purposes of wise and holy, far-reaching design. There is no more mystery here than in a multitude of the ways of Him around whom in divine government clouds and darkness so often are. He can be completely *over* what He cannot sanction in anywise; and what an immense comfort is it to know this! What a confusion would the world be if it were not so! whereas the very exercise which this now involves for us is itself most truly helpful in that discernment of good and evil in which so much of our education here consists.

The warning given is a double one. The apostle is first told, plainly and unequivocally, not to go to Jerusalem; and then the consequences of going are put

Paul by the Spirit, that he should not set foot* in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had completed the days, we departed, and went on our journey, all of them [z]accompanying us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and [a]kneeling down on the shore, we prayed, and took leave of one another; and we went on board ship, and they returned home.

2 (7-14): In bonds through Jewish enmity.

2. And having finished the voyage from Tyre, we ar-

z ch. 20. 38.
a ch. 20. 36.

*Some read, "go up to."

before him. Had the latter been announced alone, with one such as Paul, they might not have been sufficient; coming after the other, they reiterate the prohibition. Spite of all, the apostle certainly sees nothing of the kind; there is a veil over his eyes very solemn indeed in character, by reason of its being that of an impulse possessing him so exalted and so pathetic as was that love to Israel which he himself has recorded for us in the epistle to the Romans (ix. 1–4). That epistle was written in contemplation of this very journey (xv. 25); he had long treasured in his heart the thought of it, and the apparent failure of his previous attempt to reach the object of his desire had only perhaps made more absorbing that desire. Under the control of this he seems incapable of realizing any hindrance to its effectuation. Ready to any extent to sacrifice himself, how could it be possible that God should be against that which was in fact the fruit of the Spirit of Christ?

1. He wrenches himself away therefore from the beloved Ephesian disciples, a need greater than theirs pressing him on; and with a straight course and all things favoring, pursues his voyage to the Syrian coast. At Tyre he lands, and there they find disciples, with whom they remain seven days; and now comes the first distinct intimation from more than one of these, speaking by the Spirit, "that he should not set foot in Jerusalem." It is strange to find, spite of the explicitness of this, Lechler contending that it was only the knowledge of Paul's sufferings in Jerusalem that they had by the illumination of the Spirit, while "the entreaty itself, that Paul should not visit Jerusalem where such dangers awaited him, was not dictated by the Holy Ghost, but was prompted solely by human opinions and affections." He appeals, of course, not to the passage before him, but to the prophecy of Agabus which was after this, and to the language of the apostle himself in chap. xx. 23, which we have already considered, in proof of what he advances; but such a way of reading Scripture could make almost anything of it. Not a word is said here about any sufferings that were to result from the visit, but "they said by the Spirit that he should not" go there. If this were not prophecy, as we know it could not have been, then it could only be guidance; and we may notice again how fully it is confirmed to the apostle by the mouth of at least two witnesses. It is quite true that he is not really guided by it, and we may not be able to account fully for his neglect of such an intimation; but we must not set aside the plain words which we find here, and which alone put in its true light much that follows, as well as some things that have gone before. Certainly there was upon Paul the spell of a wondrous love, if we do not say, its delirium; a love, which those for whom it was, rejected, as they did the much more wondrous love of the Son of God, of which this was but the reflection. Had he not caught it in the glory of that Face, into which, we know, he was habitually looking?

Another farewell scene is depicted for us here with these brethren of Tyre, who with wives and children accompany their visitors to the ship, and with prayer take leave of them. A shadow of what is at hand seems falling upon these little companies of believers, which is lightened up with the tender constancy of an affection which has in it the assurance of eternity.

2. The party of Paul take ship once more, coasting the Syrian shore to Ptole-

rived at Ptolemais, and having saluted the brethren, remained one day with them. And departing on the morrow, we came to Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the [b]evangelist, who was one of the [c]seven, and abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, who [d]prophesied. And as we tarried some days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named [e]Agabus; and coming to us, and taking Paul's [f]girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy [g]Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and [h]deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and those of that place [i]besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then answered Paul, What do ye, weeping and [j]breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to [k]die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we were quiet, saying, The [l]will of the Lord be done.

b ch.8.5,etc. *cf.* Eph. 4 11. *cf.*2 Tim.4. 5. *cf.* Rom.10. 14, 15.
c ch. 6. 5. *cf.* Phil.1.1. *cf.* 1 Tim.3. 13.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 5. *cf.*1 Cor.14. 34, 35.
e ch. 11. 28.
f *cf.*2 Cor.12. 15. *cf.* Phil. 2. 17. *cf* Jno.13.4.
g *cf.* ver. 4. *cf.*ch.20.23.
h vers. 31-33. *cf.*Matt.20. 18, 19.
i *cf.*ch.19.30, 31. *cf.*Matt.16. 21-23.
j *cf.* ch. 20. 37; *cf.* Gal. 4. 19. k *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 6-8. l *cf.*ch. 13. 27; *cf.* Rom. 8. 28.

mais, which we now call Acre, where again they find disciples; few towns there were now, no doubt, without them. And next day they are at Cæsarea, at the house of that Philip the evangelist with whose work at Samaria we are well acquainted. We have here a glimpse of what helps us to realize the way in which the gifts of the Spirit were manifested through the assemblies. Philip has four daughters, all prophetesses, a lovely picture just put before us, one would say, that we might admire it (for we have nothing of them more than this), perhaps that we may remember that the same Spirit is with us still, and that we may covet, as we are exhorted to do, the gifts of His grace. We may also understand that women as such are not shut out from them, however there may be for them (as women) a suited sphere for their exercise. It is *nature* that has marked out this sphere; which grace does not set aside, nor limit on this account the fulness of blessing that may be theirs who covet it. How good it would be to see more of this coveting in faith, and that we would put to the proof in faith these assurances that are given us. How great would be the result, not to the individual only, but in the assembly as a whole, of believing hearts that craved from God their portion! We have not, because we ask not; we ask and have not, because our prayers are too much a conflict with God for what, if He granted, it would be disaster for us, instead of desires that rise after those blessings which are laid up for us in Christ already, and may be claimed with the full confidence of faith.

One cannot say again with Lechler that this account of Philip's daughters stands in no immediate connection with the events here related. Why should we make our own capacity to discern such things the measure of what is really in them; disparaging Scripture in the proportion in which we elevate ourselves above it? When the Church is being left of its great apostle, is it not suitable that we should be shown how fully, nevertheless, the endowment of the Spirit is upon it, even in its weakest members? that the Lord's care for it neither fails nor is abridged; and that it need neither fail nor fear because of this?

But Philip's daughters have no prophecy for Paul: it is Agabus of whom we have heard before, who, coming down from Judea, announces to him that which awaits him from the people upon whom his heart is set. It is Paul's own girdle, however, that binds his hands and feet; that is, it is his own zealous service to them that puts him into their hands. The meaning is given to him, and in the most emphatic way, as a declaration of the Spirit, of the *Holy* Spirit, who thus

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. xxi. 15–xxii. 29.)

The Arrest.

1 (xxi. 15–26): The cause of the arrest.

1. AND after these days, we made ready our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also some of the disciples from Cæsarea, to bring us to one Mnason, a [m]Cyprian, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. And when we were arrived

m cf. ch. 13. 4. cf. ch. 15. 39.

reveals to His servant the unchanged evil in the hearts of those once the murderers of the Saviour, and now ready to be his own. Was not *He* too delivered to the Gentiles? a likeness which could not but affect the apostle, so closely to follow in his Master's steps. Yet was not that Gentile cross to which they gave him up the very symbol of salvation for men? So with himself also, might the apostle argue, if this were but a means by which the tardy hearts of Israel were to be smitten to repentance, would not suffering be light that should have this result? So when those around begin in their distress to beseech him not to go up to Jerusalem, he is fixed and resolute, moved by their tears indeed, but not altered. Did they not know him ready even to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus? But the Spirit had spoken nothing about death. The captivity of years, shut up from the work he loved, and with which he was so identified, would it not be worse than any death could be? How if he had recognized it as the shadow of that setting aside of his gospel also, in days not far off?

And in fact such an intimation we, at least, may read in it. The judaizing of the Church, which he had already been called so earnestly to contend against, was to be a worse enemy to the free grace of God he published than this Jewish people now menacing himself. Alas, it would be armed with all the natural resistance of the self-righteous heart against that which humbles it, even while it exalts immeasurably the soul once humbled. Who that knows anything of himself but has known this Jew in him, not one of God's Israel indeed, but such as confronted Christ and now Paul, with his circumcision of flesh, and not of heart, and his steadfast resistance to the truth at all points. Such in the professing church at a later day the Lord Himself characterizes as those "who say they are Jews, but are not, but are the synagogue of Satan:" words which let in a terrible light upon the degradation ensuing upon their prevalence (as prevail they did), and which changed the heavenly to the earthly, spirit to flesh, grace to law, the company chosen out of the world into a confusion of Church and world together; the adversary's attack by low imitation upon that which Christ is sanctifying, cleansing it by washing of water by the Word, to present it to Himself a glorious Church!

We can understand by this, not only the apostle's captivity—that is, his gospel's,—but how this Judaism (false to the core, as false in its abuse of Christian names) gave up what it had first polluted into the hands of the world, and thus riveted the chains of a long captivity. Sad it is, though profitable, to trace, step by step, the awful transformation. It is not for us to do it now; it is enough to show how fully the history which is before us here has its spiritual counterpart in that of the Church afterwards. Judaism had only the external form of separation from the world, which could not yet be actual; the new Judaism coming in after the separation was accomplished, brought back (and of course into the place of power) the world once more. It was the Babylonish captivity of the Church of God.

SUBD. 2.

The story of how Paul actually falls into the hands of his enemies implicates the Christians in Jerusalem, who by their advice, which he takes, and to satisfy their zeal for the law, puts himself into the very place of chiefest danger, and where the presence of one known to advocate the equal footing of Jew and Gen-

at Jerusalem, the brethren [n]received us gladly; and the day following Paul went in with us to [o]James, and all the elders were present. And having saluted them, he [p]related one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they [q]glorified God. And they said unto him, Thou beholdest, brother, how [r]many myriads there are among the Jews of those who have believed; and all are [s]zealots for the law. And they have been [t]informed concerning thee that thou teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to apostatize from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the [u]customs. What is it then? a multitude will necessarily come together, for they

n ch. 15. 4.
o ch. 12. 17. cf. Gal. 2 9.
p cf. ch. 14. 27. cf.ch.15.12.
q ch. 11. 18.
r cf. ch. 4.4.
s cf. ch.22 3. cf.Phil.3.5, 6.
t cf. ver. 28.
u cf.ch.16.3.

tile would be sure to lash the unconverted Jew to fury. His own compliance, though from pure desire to be to the Jew a Jew, to win the Jew, yet not only puts him into the hands of his enemies, but takes him off the higher ground upon which he habitually walked, and renders his steps less certain. It is a painful history all round.

1. The cause of Paul's arrest is traced briefly but clearly, and shown to rest with the Jewish Christians. Before we come to this, it will not be amiss to note that it cannot be for nothing that we are told of the place in which the apostle at this time lodges: *some* meaning must certainly attach to this, whether or not we are able to find the meaning; and some relation there must be also to the narrative with which it is connected. Those also who believe in God's absolute control of history, and that Scripture everywhere shows this control, can have no difficulty in accepting a meaning flashed out of a name as a true, if hidden, indication of the mind of God. Now Mnason, at whose house Paul lodges at this time, is from a word which means "to sue for, court," and Paul is certainly here as a suitor, and in a strange place for him: he is in a place not his own. The man in Christ, which he has but lately told others it was all his boast to be (2 Cor. xii. 5), is here in the guise of one walking orderly and keeping the law. And it is the suit he has in hand that brings him down to this. He is really lodging with Mnason, the disciple from the beginning, or early disciple, as the term used is. Was it not, in fact, such early disciples, belonging to the time when Christians could be reckoned but as a sect of the Jews, among whom would naturally be found those of whom it was asserted as a universal truth that they were "all zealots for the law"? Mnason himself would be actually included here. Could Paul be ranged among these? No one could imagine it. But he certainly was laboring to make himself acceptable to these. No doubt, the law was to him a thing indifferent, and that it was his acknowledged principle to become to the Jew a Jew, that he might gain the Jew. But would they not have understood by it something more? and does not "walking orderly and keeping the law" imply that he belonged to the house of Mnason, rather than that he was but lodging there? There surely was not a selfish thought in the apostle's heart. He was walking in the spirit of pure self-sacrifice, to win his Jewish kindred to the Lord; but if he had declared to them his exact position with regard to it—"to those under the law as under the law, *not being myself under the law*" (1 Cor. ix. 20, R. V.), would it have been, could it have been, a means of winning them?

The meeting that is pictured for us as taking place is at James' house, and with the elders. The apostles seem by this time to have scattered from Jerusalem, and nothing is mentioned with regard to them. Nor indeed does James himself seem to take any prominent part, such as he took at the council to decide the place of Gentile converts with respect to the law. It is more than possible that those most fanatical as to Moses were the most forward, as they had indeed

will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: we have four men who have a [v] vow on them; take these, and purify thyself with them, and be at charge for them, that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing in those things of which they have been informed concerning thee, but that thou thyself also walkest* [w] orderly, keeping the law. But concerning those of the Gentiles who have believed we have [z] written giving judgment that they should† keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day

v *cf.* ch. 18. 18.

w *ctr.* Phil. 3. 7, 8. *cf.* Gal. 6. 12–16.

x ch. 15. 22–29.

* This is one word in the original, and suggests keeping rank.
† Many add, "observe no such thing, only to."

made their voices to be heard first on the former occasion. Paul himself, in the natural progress of divine revelation, had doubtless made advance, while it would be well if under the influence of their alarm at the steadily growing questions involved by the increasing Gentile element in the assemblies, these had not gone backward. There was a strong feeling abroad as to Paul, and a multitude behind who must needs come together. While it was the nation still in unbelief of which Paul was surely thinking, he is faced with this opposition first to be encountered of the converted and Christian Jews. On their side they must needs recognize also the wondrous work of divine grace which God has been working by him among the nations. They will make no doubt that all the reports that have come to them concerning him are but perversions. They are ready to assume that he is really as good a Jew as ever; what they propose to him then is not a concession: it is a justification of himself from calumny merely. Let the Gentiles, as they have conceded, remain Gentiles; he could not have taught the Jews to apostatize from Moses, and not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs. Let him take then these four men who, being believers like himself, could yet bind themselves with the Nazarite vow, and presenting himself with them in the temple purified, take upon him the expenses necessary for their completion of it, and that publicly, that all might recognize clearly his own relation to the law.

Nothing is proposed to him, as many have thought, about taking upon himself the vow in question. He is merely to purify himself ceremonially, for his appearance in the temple, and it was no new thing that they advised, but what is known to have been done by others very near the time at which all this took place. In fact there was nothing in all that was advised that the apostle could not have done with a good conscience as a part of his privilege to give up his own liberty in toleration of the ignorant infirmity of others; but the question returns, and will return: Was it to be understood in this way? Here among "zealots for the law," there was indeed ignorance on every side, could he then adapt himself to this, raising no question, leaving them to grow into the truth, as necessarily they would? not forcing any, as in fact he had never forced,—tolerant where God yet was tolerant? Could he not in such a case, without professing anything where it was at present hopeless to bring round this mass of prejudiced opposition to the higher truth, as he saw and followed it, simply go through the ceremonial as they prescribed it to him, and remove out of his way this hindrance to that upon which his heart was set, the proclamation of Christ to his kindred by one whose very advocacy itself was evidence of the truth that he proclaimed, who with his own eyes had seen Christ Jesus the Lord, and had seen men bow before that sacred Name as he had?

Yes, it was indeed vain to expect to quell in any other way the storm that was beginning to manifest itself, though in its first zephyr breathings. He had

purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, notifying [his] [y]completion of the days of purification, until the offering were offered for every one of them.

2 (xxi. 27-40): The arrest made.

2. And when the seven days were almost completed, the [z]Jews who were from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help! this is the man who [a]teacheth all everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he hath brought Greeks into the temple, and hath profaned this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city [b]Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And the whole city was [c]moved, and there was a concourse of the people; and they laid hold of Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the [d]doors were shut. And as they were seeking to [e]kill him, a report came up to the chief captain* of the cohort,† that the whole of

y *cf.* Nu. 6. 13, etc.

z *cf.* ch. 13. 50 *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15.

a ver. 21. *cf.* ch. 18. 13.

b ch. 20. 4.

c *cf.* ch. 19. 29.

d *cf.* 2 Ki. 11. 15. *cf.* 2 Chron. 26. 20.

e *cf.* ch. 7. 57–60.

*Greek, "chiliarch," captain of a thousand: the military tribune commanding the garrison of Antonia.

†Or, "band."

seen the whirlwinds of Jewish passion aroused in the very midst of the Gentiles, and able to carry with them the Gentiles themselves, otherwise cynical and indifferent. What would it be with such questions started here where the crowd was one, and Christians too were in zealous opposition to whatever seemed to touch the authority of Moses?

But what then did all this do but echo the words which shortly were to come home to him with terrible confirmation as he faced the wild tumult from the castle-stairs, "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me"? The apostle of the Gentiles must renounce all hope of being God's messenger to Israel; and he who sought it, spite of the burning, uncalculating love that had brought him there, was necessarily out of the path to which God had called him. The testimony to Christ indeed was to be permitted him, though it could but demonstrate once more the hardness of heart to which they could only be given up. The Lord would and does own His faithful servant in a testimony, to which He would not nevertheless have sent him. Over it all He was; and the history of that which follows becomes, as has been said, the prophecy of long centuries to come, in which such scenes would be in principle re-enacted upon a larger scale. History is averred to repeat itself, and the reason is obvious: for man repeats himself; and poor fallen man is in every generation but the reflection of his father Adam. And where God's grace has made a difference, still there remains even here a nature which maintains but too much of the likeness. God's hand has overruled in this case to forecast the future for our instruction; yet even this could not be so impressive and complete if it were not founded upon a similarity of moral elements which in their inter-working present a more than superficial parallel. It is a parallel of causes as well as effects,- fruits and consequences which we can trace to roots and seeds which are in ourselves also, and present grounds of real and profitable self-judgment.

2. The counsel of the elders is acted on by the apostle. He does not, for he could not, declare himself under the law. He treats them all, one would say, as those who were not ripe for disclosures of this nature, which must wait for a fit season to be made. Enough that he can undertake this charge and perform this purification in the same way in which he had circumcised Timothy some time since. The shadows for him had passed in that which had fulfilled them: these with their zeal for the law were in the shadow still, and he must wait

Jerusalem was in a tumult; who immediately took [f]soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came up and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be [g]bound with two chains, and inquired who he might be, and what he had done. And some in the crowd called out [h]one thing, some another; and he, unable to know anything certain on account of the tumult, commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came to the stairs, so it was that he was borne by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed, crying out, [i]Away with him! And as Paul was about to be led into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say somewhat unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou not then the [j]Egyptian who before these days made insurrection and led away into the wilderness the four

[f] *cf.* ch. 23. 27.
[g] *cf.* ver. 11.
[h] *cf.* ch. 19. 32.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 23. 18. *cf.* Phil. 3. 10.
[j] *cf.* ch. 5.36.

upon God for their deliverance. But it is evident, nevertheless, that here he is in no position to help them, but that his present action must encourage them in their own. But his heart presses him on to reach a place in which his voice may be heard with acceptance by his people, and he stoops to the present sacrifice required: to what it will lead on he does not know.

In fact, the plan seems to be working well; the days are almost completed, when that comes of which he has been warned. Some Jews from Asia find him in the temple, having seen him previously in the city with an Ephesian Greek—one of his Gentile "nurselings," as they might taunt him, from the name. Outside, they had endured him, as it seems, or at least had refrained from an attack; but now this man with his disreputable tastes had dared invade the sanctuary itself; doubtless the same man inside, as he had been out: he had brought his Greek there, no doubt. Instantly there flashes out the wrath of the impetuous, haughty race. The city is moved, and the people run together, and dragging him out, shut to the temple-gates. Paul is in those well-known hands that spare not; and only by the intervention of God the Romans become his saviors from the violence of the raging mob! The plan which appeared so reasonable has ended only in disaster: Paul need take no more trouble to appease the Christian Jews, and is in the very worst possible position to reach the unbelieving ones!

It is significant that Lysias, the chief captain's name, means "one who looses, or delivers," and that nothing but the Roman arms in fact accomplished the deliverance of the believing Jews from the legal system in which they were bound up. It was not to be more than a decade, if so much, until that temple which was its necessary centre and heart should be overthrown, according to our Lord's prophecy, by the Roman power, and the people scattered over the face of the earth. Their house, long bereft of the divine Presence, but where alone the blood of atonement could be offered for their sins, and with which all their ritual was connected, was taken from them utterly, and the system ended, although unbelief might still grip it with dead hands. In the rejection of the grace which was now going out to the Gentiles, they had rejected that which was their only possible salvation, and judgment in brief time followed; though not before the last word should be uttered by him whom in fact, though not in form, they had delivered to the Gentiles, bidding the true in heart amongst them go forth out of the camp (Heb. xiii. 13). That he should have the last word for them, who had sought them with such earnest desire, was the divine recognition of him whom they had treated with unworthy suspicion, and be-

thousand men of the assassins? But Paul said, I am a Jew of [k]Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul stood upon the stairs, and beckoned with his hand unto the people.

3 (xxi. 40–xxii. 21): Paul declares his conversion, and the revelation made to him.

3. And a great silence being made, he addressed them in the [l]Hebrew dialect, saying, Brethren and fathers, hear my defence now unto you. (And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew dialect, they were the more quiet; and he saith,) I am a Jew, born in [m]Tarsus, of Cilicia, and brought up in this city at the feet of [n]Gamaliel, instructed according to the [o]strict letter of [our] fathers' law, being a zealot for God, as ye all are to-day, one who [p]persecuted this way unto death,—binding and delivering up to prison men and women; as also the [q]high priest beareth me witness, and all the elderhood, from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and [r]journeyed to Damascus, to bring also those that were there bound unto Jerusalem that they might be punished.

k ch. 22. 3.

l ch. 22. 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 20.
m ch. 9. 11, 30. ch. 21. 39.
n ch. 5. 34. *ctr.* Lk. 10. 39.
o ch. 26. 5. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4, 5.
p ch. 8. 3. *cf.* Gal. 1. 13, 14, 23. *cf.* Phil 3 6. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
q ch. 9. 1, 2. ch. 26. 4, 5.
r ch. 26. 12.

trayed, however undesignedly, into the hands of his enemies. "According to the wisdom given to him," says the apostle of the circumcision, "our beloved brother Paul has written to you" (2 Pet. iii. 15). The voice that had been closed by their own folly while among them now spoke in all the majesty of the truth which could no more be silenced.

3. Yet he is permitted also here one last appeal in behalf of his Lord and Saviour. Won by the demeanor of his prisoner, the chief captain gives him leave to address the mob from whom he has rescued him; and Paul uses his liberty to relate to them the story of his conversion and of the revelation made to him. He reasons with them, reminding them of his past, in which he too had shown himself with as much false zeal for God as they were now showing. As men do commonly, he had followed the belief in which he had been trained, as both the high priest and elders could bear witness of him, persecuting to the death believers in Christ, whether they were men or women, and even hunting for them beyond the borders of the land. Nothing had stopped him but that intervention from heaven itself which had revealed to him Jesus the Nazarene in glory! Those with him had seen also the light, but had not heard the words * that were uttered, which were for himself alone. He had heard the Lord declare Himself the One he persecuted. Blinded by the glory of that light, he was led into Damascus, there to await, as he was bidden, further revelations.

Paul narrates more fully than the previous history has done, the visit of Ananias,—"a pious man," as he remarks, "according to the law,"—through whom at once his sight is restored to him, and he is declared to be one chosen by the God of their fathers to know His will and see the † Righteous One, and hear, as a special witness for Him, a voice out of His mouth. Then he is bidden to be baptized, and have his sins washed away, as he thus owns the authority of Jesus. It is a clear example of baptismal remission of sins on entering the

*This is in effect the difference between the statement here and that in chap. ix. 7, in which it is said that those with him heard the voice: this is the genitive case, and speaks a partial hearing,—the sound of it but not the utterance, as the accusative in the present instance—the voice at full length.

†It is striking that the apostle does not mention the name of the Lord Jesus but once in this entire address, omitting it even where, as in verse 18, it would most naturally be used. This is due, perhaps, to a desire to avoid further inflaming the Jews.—S. R.

Now it came to pass, as I was journeying and drawing near unto Damascus, about [s]midday suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me; and I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou [t]me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus, the [u]Nazarene, whom thou persecutest. Now they that were with me [v]saw indeed the light,* but heard not the voice of him who spake to me. And I said, [w]What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be [x]told thee of all things which it hath been appointed for thee to do. And as I could not see for the [y]glory of that light, being [z]led by the hand of those that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one [a]Ananias, a pious man [b]according to the law, borne witness to by all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me, and standing by me, said to me, Brother Saul, [c]receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our [d]fathers hath forechosen thee to know his will, and to see the [e]Righteous One, and to hear a voice out of his mouth. For thou shalt be [f]witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be [g]baptized, and have thy sins [h]washed away, [i]calling upon his name.

And it came to pass that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and as I was praying in the temple, I became in ecstasy, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they

s ch. 9. 3. ch. 26. 13. *cf.* Matt. 27. 45.
t *cf.* Matt. 6. 22, 23. ch. 9. 4, 5. ch. 26. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 12. *cf.* Matt. 25. 45. *cf.* Eph. 5. 29, 30.
u *cf.* Jno. 1. 46. *cf.* Is. 53. 2, 3.
v *cf.* ch. 9. 7. *cf.* Jno. 12. 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
w *cf.* ch. 16. 30. *cf.* ch. 2. 37.
x ch. 9. 6. *cf.* ch. 26. 16–18. *cf.* ch. 11. 13, 14.
y *cf.* Is. 6. 1–5. *cf.* Lk. 1. 20.
z *ctr.* ch. 13. 11.
a ch. 9. 10.
b *cf.* ver. 3. *cf.* ch. 21. 20.
c ch. 9. 17.
d *cf.* ch 3. 13. *cf.* ch. 13. 17. *cf* ch. 26. 6.
e *cf.* ch. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 16. 10.
f *cf.* ch. 9. 15. *cf.* ch. 26. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 1.
g ch. 2. 41, etc.

* Some add, "and were filled with fear."

h *cf.* Rom. 6. 3, 4; *cf.* Col. 2. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 20–22; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 17. i *cf.* Rom. 10. 13.

kingdom: on God's part he who truly bows to Christ is absolutely forgiven: but on man's part, as openly admitted by baptism, this can be but a conditional announcement, available, not for introduction into heaven, but into the company of disciples upon earth. As a kingdom of truth (Jno. xviii. 37) the kingdom means discipleship.

The crowd listens to this yet, spite of the claim made for the Crucified One: but we are soon to find that this is not acceptance. The apostle comes now to what is pressing upon his spirit, as he looks upon those dark, upturned faces, upon which one can imagine, however restrained as yet, that he sees the storm gathering. What can he presage else, as he repeats, emphasized as they are by recent occurrences, words from the lips of truth itself which had long since warned him, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." How he must have watched them as he related his ineffectual pleading at that time! "Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believe in Thee; and when the blood of thy witness* Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those who slew him!" Was Paul not just the witness now to be believed?

* It is touching to remember that Paul is here making a definite confession, before the people, many of whom had doubtless witnessed his mad zeal, of his own sinful persecution of Stephen.—S. R.

will not [j]receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves [k]know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believed in thee; and when the blood of thy witness [l]Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those who slew him. And he said unto me, Go; for I will [m]send thee to the nations* afar off.

4 (xxii. 22-29): Roman citizenship.

4. And they heard him to [n]this word; and they lifted up their voice and said, [o]Away with such an one from the earth! for it is not [p]fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast [q]dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, directing that he should be examined by [r]scourging, that he might know for what cause they cried out so against him. But when they stretched him forward with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion standing by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a [s]Roman, and uncondemned? And when the centurion heard it, he went and told the chief captain, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came to [him] and said unto him, Tell me, Art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, *I* for a great sum bought this citizenship. And Paul said, But I also was [so] [t]born. They then who were about to examine immediately departed from him; and the chief captain also was [u]afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

j *cf.* ch. 9.29, 30. *cf.* Matt.23. 13.
k vers. 4, 5.
l ch. 7. 58. ch. 8. 1.
m ch. 9. 15. *cf.* Rom.11. 13. *cf.* Gal. 2. 7 9.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 45. *cf.* ch. 17. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 16.
o ch. 21. 36.
p *cf.* ch. 7 58.
q *cf.* 1 Sa. 4. 12.
r *cf.* Jno.19. 1.
s *cf.* ch.16.37. *cf.* Phil. 3. 20.
t *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 20-24.
u *cf.* ch. 16. 38, 39. *ctr.* ch. 23. 27.

* Or, "far off to the Gentiles."

But He who spoke had broken off appeal: "Go," He said: "for I will send thee to the nations afar off."

4. For what then was he standing there? and what was in his mind as he declared thus to their face their unrepentant stubbornness? Would he break them down by it, even then, that they might show it to be but a thing of the past, and no longer applicable? Or did it announce the hopelessness which had now taken possession of him, the past and present linking themselves together rapidly in his mind, as when facing death they are known often to come up? If so, it was confirmed in a moment as he stood before them plainly avowed, the apostle of the Gentiles.* At once the short quiet is over. All the arrogant pride of an elect people, with which all that should humble man most may in fact inspire him, burst out of that heaving and gesticulating human mass confronting him, crying out madly for his death. The Roman captain, baffled by the foreign tongue that had been made use of, and conceiving by the outcry that there must be some proportionate cause, commands to examine Paul by scourging. It was the custom of the day, and for many a day; but from which the Roman citizen was exempted. Paul, as we know, was that; and his simple

* Both conclusions could be drawn, and both may have been in the apostle's mind. Certainly it seems clear that the Spirit of God intended us to draw these conclusions. But it looks, too, as if Paul were just entering upon an extended account of his work among the Gentiles, in order to lead up to a defense of his course, and more particularly in explanation of that for which he had been arrested. In his address before Felix he seems to resume the defense just where it was broken off here (Chap. xxiv. 11–19).—S. R.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xxii. 30–xxiii. 35.)
Before the Special People of God.

1 (xxii. 30-xxiii. 11). The Supreme Court.

1 (xxii. 30-xxiii. 5): The head.

1. [1] AND on the morrow, desirous to know the certainty of why he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the [v]council to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them. And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived in all good [w]conscience before God unto this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded those that stood by him to [z]smite him on the mouth. Then Paul said unto him, God is about to smite thee, [y]whited wall; sittest thou

v ch. 23. 28.
w cf. 2 Tim. 1. 3.
cf. ch. 24. 16.
x cf. Lk. 22. 63-65.
y ctr. Jno. 18. 22, 23.
ctr. 1 Pet. 2 23.
cf. Matt. 23. 27.

question, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" brings the chief captain to inquire, and ends the matter. That the apostle was well within his legal rights, none can, of course, question; but it *has* been questioned whether it was according to the height of the truth which he proclaimed to plead such rights; but the governments of the earth have always their place with Paul, and are recognized as a ministry of God for good to His people; why not thankfully use them for that, when it needed only a word of information to secure it, and there was not a thought of resistance?* With the man in Christ, as such, the governments of the earth have nought to do; nor is it to forget such a place to realize that as the creatures of God, still upon the earth, we have other relations than those implied by this. All natural relationships lie outside of it; while the peace and power and object of the man in Christ are to go with us everywhere, through all.

SUBD. 3.

Paul still awaits his trial before the supreme court of Israel, which should have been, and was professedly, the spiritual court, before the heads of the people set apart from all others as the special people of God. The place and title had been indeed long forfeited, but not the responsibility of being what the claim implied. The trial becomes in fact that of themselves in this character. As a trial of Paul, it has no result, but breaks up in confusion: its own trial is all the more perfect; its incompetence is absolute. The people have already manifested themselves; and they are what their leaders have made them; not irresponsible on that account, but most guilty in yielding themselves to such leadership. We have here the head, Ananias; the body, disunited on every essential point. In contrast with all this we have lastly the judgment of the Lord Himself, who owns His faithful servant in his witness to Him. After this he has to be once more saved by the Gentile power from a conspiracy against his life; which at the same time shifts the scene to Cæsarea, and brings him before the tribunal of the world.

1. [1]The court of Israel sits at the bidding of the Roman commander: a significant sign of where they were before God. Lysias, unable to gather the cause of so much frenzy and confusion, summons the Sanhedrin, that the charge against Paul may be made clear. The latter, with his eyes fixed upon his judges, affirms his having lived in all good conscience before God until that day. Conscience is

*And yet it is for his own protection that Paul speaks. He had not done so at Philippi, having submitted to the cruel indignity of being beaten by Roman magistrates (chap. xvi. 22). He seems only to have spoken of his citizenship on the next day for the purpose of removing any stigma that might attach to the Christian name. The magistrates are compelled tacitly to remove the stigma.

But here Paul claims Roman citizenship, even emphasizing his free birth, as he had already declared he was a citizen of no mean city. In the next chapter he declares himself a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. While this last is far worse than the others, we cannot fail linking them together. The fact remains that the beloved and honored servant of Christ was in a false position all through, and these various acts savor a little of that spirit of compromise to which he had committed himself.—S. R.

even to judge me according to the law, and in [z] violation of law commandest me to be smitten? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? And Paul said, I [a] knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is [b] written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.

2 (xxiii. 6–10): Dissension in the midst.

2 But when Paul perceived that the one part were [c] Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the

z *cf.* Deut. 25. 1, 2. *cf.* Deut. 19. 18
a *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 8. *ctr.* Jno. 8. 46.
b Ex. 22. 28. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 17.
c *cf.* ch. 4. 1. *cf.* ch. 5. 17.

not the standard by which man is to be judged; nor does the apostle mean therefore to affirm this. It is simply his uprightness of which he is speaking; and indeed especially in those later and Christian days, in which alone they would care to question it. There was no accusing voice within, from which he would seek escape, which he had (or had had) to silence. He did not come as a criminal to throw himself upon their mercy, but as one pledged to the truth, to maintain it. His unblenching look was fixed upon his judges as he said this, confirming his bold words.

But the anger of the high priest is roused at once, and he commands those standing by him to smite Paul on the mouth. It was the only answer he could give, and showed, perhaps, the sting of his own conscience, which the apostle embodied for him then, and which he was accustomed to treat only as an enemy. Paul at once announces his judgment from God: "God is about to judge thee, whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me according to law, and in breach of law commandest me to be smitten?" This is not an imprecation, as is plain; it is the announcement of judgment on the part of God, and was fulfilled at the outbreak of the troubles which began the last Jewish war. Paul is here passed from the place of the accused altogether, into that of judge; and he was not one to take so solemn a place without realizing what he was doing. The high priests of this time were in fact a sorrowful indication of the condition of the people, as they were also their official representatives. Paul knew not in this case that the "whited wall,"—the painted hypocrite to whom he addressed himself.—was the high priest; and he apologizes when he learns the fact; although with the text he quotes he puts the man whom they call "*God's* high priest" upon no higher ground than "a ruler of Thy people." It has been said, and rightly, surely, that the Holy Spirit could not say, "I knew not;" yet the Spirit doubtless was in the judgment pronounced; and the indignation shown by Paul had so much justification that, remembering his own words at another time, "Be angry and sin not," and realizing that there is a necessary anger at iniquity, which is sinless, one hesitates to say whether he had passed the limit.

Of much more importance it seems than to decide as to the apostle, it is to realize that the Spirit must have used the very lack of knowledge on Paul's part to lay bare the iniquity that was upon the head of Israel's priesthood now, and the doom that was impending. If a shadow that priesthood was at any time, now it was but the shadow of a shadow. Out of these forms all semblance of life had departed; and they must by the law of nature vanish away.

2 There follows the further testimony of a house divided against itself, and that in the most important matters. Moreover that which was most contrary to God—which indeed destroyed the very foundations—was in the ascendancy, not indeed in regard to the number of its followers, who were few, but nevertheless possessed at this time of the chief places. The comfortless doctrine of the Sadducees which denied all future life for man could never appeal to the masses, but remained as the justification of those too rich and well satisfied with the present to trouble about the future. It was the unbelief of immortality; not a faith, but a blight of faith. Between Sadducee and Pharisee the friction was necessarily of the extremest kind, although they might band together for a common purpose, which was then sure to be of the most evil character.

council, Brethren, I am a [d]Pharisee, the [e]son of Pharisees: * concerning the hope and [f]resurrection of the dead I am being judged. And when he had said this, there arose a [g]dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is [h]no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamor; and the scribes of the Pharisees' part arose and strove, saying, We find [i]no evil in this man; and [what] if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an [j]angel? † And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the [k]soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

[3] And the night following the Lord [l]stood by him and

[3] (xxiii. 11): The Presence of the Lord.

d *ctr.* Phil. 3. 5, 7.
e *cf.* Gal. 2. 18–21. *ctr.* Col. 3. 10, 11.
f ch. 24. 15, 21. *cf.* ch. 26. 5–7. ch. 28. 20.
g *cf.* ch. 28. 29.
h Matt. 22. 23.
i *ctr.* ch. 22. 22.
j *cf.* ch. 22. 7. *cf.* ch. 5. 34–40.
k ch. 21. 31–33.
l *cf.* ch. 18 9. *cf.* ch. 27. 23. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 16–18. *cf.* Heb. 11. 5, 6.

* Many read, "of a Pharisee."
† Some read, "If . . . let us not fight against God."

None knew better than Paul this essential opposition. With the Pharisees also he had a link, in all this doctrine which the Sadducee wholly denied. Of this he now avails himself: was it to throw confusion merely among those who were alike in hostility to the Name which was all his glory? or had he the hope, slight as it might be, of working upon the more orthodox by an appeal to the truth they had? All that could be spoken of as "the hope," and which connected itself more fully for the Christian than even for the Pharisee with the resurrection of the dead, separated both from the chief men in the council there. *As between these*, Paul's claim to be a Pharisee would certainly be justified; that he would have made it in any other connection one can hardly believe. But we are bound to impute, and with such an one as the apostle, the highest motive possible for what he did. He is clearly not at his highest. Yet he might have discerned that here there was no opportunity for his great theme, which must have been well known to these his judges, even if they had not been amongst the crowd that listened to him from the castle stairs; and he might have realized that now the suggestion of the link between Pharisaism and Christianity was the best seed he could sow on soil like that before him. In fact there seems a certain success in it. Could they have been ignorant how much they were admitting when they allowed that perhaps a spirit or an angel might have spoken to Paul? We cannot follow this to any after results, but that does not justify us in declaring that there were none, or in thinking even that this was not all that could be done upon this occasion in testimony to Christ. Certainly we have no right to suppose that that devoted love to his people which had made him in face of all assurances as to the result put himself thus into their hands, had failed him now that he was there, and that he was merely trying to throw his foes into disorder as a means of escape for himself: he as to whom the Spirit in every city bore witness that bonds and afflictions awaited him.

But the effect, as far as we are given to trace it, seems to be more to expose the condition of things in Israel than to alter anything. The very men who here are ready apparently to go far in admission of the divine claim of Christianity would soon repent their hasty speech. The council, having exhibited its incapacity for righteous judgment, breaks up in mere confusion; Paul being once more saved out of their hands by those who are thus allowed to show their true title over them. Israel itself it is that is under judgment, and that in the chief seat of wisdom and authority.

[3] The apostle has accomplished nothing by his earnest self-devotion; he is manifestly out of his place, and the power realized in his labors among the Gen-

said, Be of good courage; * for as thou hast borne full witness at Jerusalem of the things concerning me, so must thou bear witness also at [m] Rome.

2 (xxiii. 12–35): The conspiracy and deliverance.

2. And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and put themselves under a [n] curse, saying that they would neither [o] eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty who had made this conspiracy; and they came to the chief priests and elders and said, We have put ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing till we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he [p] bring him down to you,† as though ye would judge more exactly of his case; and we, before ever he come near, are ready to kill him. But Paul's [q] sister's son heard of the lying in wait, and came and entered into the castle, and reported it to Paul. And Paul called to him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man to the chief captain, for he hath somewhat to report to him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me to

m *cf.* Rom. 15. 24, 28. ch. 19. 21. *cf.* ch. 26. 16.

n *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 2. *cf.* 1 Sa. 14. 24.

o *ctr.* Ps. 132. 1–5. *cf.* Prov. 4. 16.

p ch. 22. 30.

q *cf.* Col. 4. 10.

* Some add, "Paul." † Some add, "to-morrow."

tiles is not with him here. All the more, now that this has been fully manifest, does he find the divine arm thrown round him, and himself get the ministry that he needs to sustain him in this failure of cherished hopes. "The night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good courage; for as thou hast borne full witness at Jerusalem of the things concerning me, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

How beautiful the strong expression, "full witness!" It might have seemed that he had not had opportunity for this. And how much cause of exercise and sad questioning might there be in regard to this! That which he had been warned of had taken place; the warning which he had not heeded. Whatever might have been the motive, how vain to run contrary to the dictates of a Wisdom which was at the same time the perfection of Love! Yet He at least could sympathize with His servant's sorrow who had wept His own tears over Jerusalem, and had to say too, as *he* was saying, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." And the Lord gives him too in his sorrow to have part also in His consolation, "yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." It might seem as if the Lord were even thinking of such reflections as we would be apt to make upon the disappointed and sorrow-stricken laborer, and were throwing around him the shield of *His* acceptance. He who has done worthily at Jerusalem shall have committed to him the same testimony at Rome! How well He knows that this is Paul's blessedness to bear witness for Him! How He assures him of strength that shall be with him to carry him through; and that all the might of the world is powerless against him! Blessed be God that this remains in its comfort abidingly for those to whom the world will have the same Marah-spring to offer, which the "Tree" alone can sweeten.

So he goes back to his old call as the apostle of the Gentiles, if he be now "an ambassador in chains." Rome! what treatment will the proud city of the world give to an ambassador in chains?

2. The council is not, however, the Jews' last answer to the gospel of God's grace. Their moral state comes out still more in the conspiracy which follows to lie in wait for Paul and kill him. The forty or more pledge themselves to it by a religious vow, and then communicate their plan to the chief priests and

him, and asked me to bring unto thee this young man, who hath somewhat to say unto thee. And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside, asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to report to me? And he said, the Jews have [r]agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow to the council, as though they would inquire something more precise concerning him. Do not thou therefore be persuaded by them, for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have put themselves under a curse neither to eat nor drink till they have slain him; and now they are ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Utter to no man that thou hast represented these things unto me. And he called to him a certain two of the centurions, and said, Get ready two hundred [s]soldiers that they may go as far as Cæsarea, and seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, for the third hour of the night; and [he bade them] provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe through to Felix the governor; and he wrote a [t]letter in this form:—

Claudius Lysias to the most excellent [w]governor Felix, greeting. This man having been [v]seized by the Jews, and about to be [w]slain by them, I coming up with the soldiery rescued, having [x]learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the ground on which they accused him, I brought him down to their [y]council, whom I found to be accused of [z]questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge [a]worthy of death or bonds. And when it was [b]disclosed to me that there would be a plot* against the man, I immediately sent him to thee, charging his [c]accusers also to speak against him before thee. Farewell.†

The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with

r vers. 12-15.
s *cf.* ch. 21. 32.
t *cf.* ch. 25. 26.
u *cf.* ch 24. 3. *cf.* ch. 26. 25.
v *cf.* ch. 21. 11.
w ch. 21. 30 35.
x *ctr.* ch. 22 25-29.
y ch. 22. 30
z *cf.* ch. 18. 15. *cf.* ch. 25. 19
a *cf.* ch. 25 25. *cf.* ch. 26. 31 *cf.* 1 Pet. 2 12, 19.
b vers. 16 22.
c *cf.* ch. 24. 19.

* Many read, "by the Jews." † Some omit.

elders, without a thought, evidently of opposition on their part, nor that they will do aught but help on their design. And plainly they are not mistaken, although we hear nothing more about it, as God in His providential care for His servant causes the whole to fall to the ground. At the right moment Paul's sister's son, of whom we have not heard before, comes forward to declare what has come to his knowledge; and Lysias, now thoroughly aroused, sends off his prisoner, well protected by an escort, to the governor at Cæsarea. That he seeks to make capital out of his zeal on behalf of a Roman citizen, stretching the truth considerably in order to do so, scarcely calls for remark, so thoroughly is it the way of the world at all times. By this act Paul is transferred from the Jews' tribunal to that of the Gentiles, though the Jews are still his accusers to the end. If Jerusalem can no more put to death the prophets herself, she will use the hands of others as far as she can influence them. We are now to see Paul therefore at Cæsar's judgment seat.

him, and returned to the castle; and they when they entered into [d]Cæsarea and presented the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when he had read it, and asked of what [e]province he was, and learning that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are arrived. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's prætorium.

d *cf.* ch. 21. 8–14.

e ch. 21. 39 *cf.* Lk. 23. 6, 7.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chaps. xxiv.–xxvi.)

Before the world's tribunal.

1 (xxiv.): Rebellion of will against righteousness.

1 (1–9): The grounds of the charge.

1. [1] AND after five days the [f]high priest Ananias came down, with certain* elders and an [g]orator, one Tertullus, and laid their information against Paul before the governor. And he being called, Tertullus began to accuse [him], saying, Seeing that by thee we [h]enjoy much peace, and by thy foresight things are set right for this nation, we receive it every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But that I may not detain thee too much, I entreat thee to hear us briefly in thine equity. For we have found this man a [i]pest, and moving insurrections among all the Jews throughout the inhabited earth, and a [j]ringleader

f ch. 23. 2.

g *cf.* ch. 12. 20.

h *ctr.* ver. 10. *cf.* ver. 27.

i *cf.* ch. 17. 6. *cf.* Lk. 23 2.

j *cf.* ch. 11. 26. *cf.* ch. 28. 22. *cf.* ver. 14.

* Many read, "the."

SUBD. 4.

1. Before the governor the Jewish charge is quickly estimated at its worth; but that does not end it. Self-interest governs all; though conscience may feebly make its voice heard. As before the Jewish council, the judges are really those that are being judged, although there is no denunciation of judgment, as in the high priest's case. Christ came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Felix, the "happy," the first of the two governors with whom we have here to do, does all that man's will combined with power can do to make good his name. Man turned away from God, and disbelieving His love and care, necessarily cares for himself, and counts it pleasure to do his own will. Violence and corruption went together in him: the two characters of the world at large. His wife Drusilla, who is mentioned presently, a Jewess, and the sister of Agrippa, had been seduced by him from the king of Emesa, her former husband. "With all cruelty and licentiousness," says the Roman historian, "he exercised the authority of a king in the spirit of a slave." He was in fact a freedman of Claudius, who had appointed him governor; and through his brother's influence with the emperor was able to retain his place. By Lysias Paul is presented to him as practically an innocent man; for questions of Jewish law meant little to the heathen. Still, if he were an object of interest to the Jew, the governor might find his own interest in it. His record was not good, and to please the people might be a point of wisdom; not, on the other hand, to give him up to them too easily: there might also be advantage on the other side. This is the way accordingly, in which we find him acting; and we are allowed to see his motives too.

[1] The importance of the prisoner is soon seen by the high priest coming down himself, with some of the elders, and a Latin orator to plead their cause; who with fulsome flattery sets the matter before Felix. "A mover of insurrection" is to appeal to the quick ears of the Roman; "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" shows his importance to themselves. They repeat also the false

of the sect of the Nazarenes, who also attempted to [k]profane the temple; whom we also had seized, [and would have judged according to our law; but Lysias the chief captain came up and took him with great force out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to thee] * from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to discover all these things of which we accuse him. And the Jews also [l]joined in the charge, asserting that these things were so.

2 (10-23): The answer.

2 And when the governor beckoned him to speak, Paul answered, Knowing that for [m]many years thou hast been judge unto this nation, I cheerfully answer as to the things concerning myself: as thou canst ascertain that it is not more than [n]twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem; and neither in the temple did they find me arguing with any one, or stirring up a crowd, neither in the synagogues, nor throughout the city; nor can they [o]prove to thee the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to thee that according to the way by them [p]called a sect so serve I my fathers' God, believing all things that are according to the law, and that are [q]written in the prophets; having hope towards God, which these also themselves look for, that there is to be a [r]resurrection both of just and unjust. Herein also do I exercise myself to have always a [s]conscience void of offence toward God and men. Now after some years I arrived to bring [t]alms to my nation and offerings; whereupon † they found me [u]purified in the temple, not with crowd

k *ctr.* ch. 21. 27-29. *cf.* ver. 18. *cf.* ch. 19. 37.
l *cf.* ver. 13. *cf.* ch. 6. 11-14.
m *ctr.* ver. 2. *cf.* ch. 26. 2, 3.
n *cf.* ver. 1 with ch. 21. 27.
o *cf.* ver. 6. *cf.* ch. 25. 11.
p ver. 5.
q *cf.* ch. 26. 22, 23. *cf.* ch. 17. 2, 3. *cf.* Lk. 24. 44, 45.
r *cf.* ch. 23. 6. *cf.* ch. 17. 31. *cf.* ch. 4. 33. *cf.* Jno. 5. 28, 29. *cf.* Rev. 20. 4-6, 11-15.
s *cf.* ch. 23. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 18.
t *cf.* Rom. 15. 25-28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 1-3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 1, etc. *cf.* Gal. 2. 10. *cf.* ch. 11. 27-30.
u *cf.* ch. 21. 26.

* Most omit; but the sentence does not seem complete without it.
† Or, "in which," that is in making the ceremonial offerings.

charge of profanation of the temple,—a matter which he would know was quite competent to cause grave trouble among a people as sensitive in religious externals as were the Jews. By examination the governor might soon convince himself of the truth of what they were saying.

2 Paul, answering for himself, easily breaks through this web of sophistry. It was but twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem to worship. He had been neither disputing with any, nor making a tumult; and they had no witnesses to produce for the substantiation of their charges! His belonging to what was in their eyes a sect he owns, but a sect of the most perfect orthodoxy according to the law; and he names especially the doctrine of the resurrection (with a probe, perhaps, for the conscience of his judge) of the just and also of the unjust. And with him this was not unpractical creed-holding merely: he exercised himself always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man.

What resurrection was for the apostle as the basis of Christian confidence and position those that were before him could not be expected to understand. Nor does he go on now to speak of Christ risen, but only urges the power of such a truth as the Roman and the Sadducean Jew alike knew nothing of. But the unjust were to rise, as well as the just. With him it was a sweet and purifying hope; for them what should be a warning of the most solemn character. But what did any of them know about an exercised conscience?

Such however was he; and as they had no witness as to things charged which they knew not, so as to what they did know—his conduct before the council, what complaint could they bring but one that condemned themselves as Jews,

nor yet with tumult; they were certain Jews from [v]Asia, who ought to be present before thee, and to be the accusers, if they had aught against me. Or else let these themselves say what [w]wrong they found in me when I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice which I cried standing among them, [x]Touching the resurrection of the dead I am being judged this day before you.

But Felix, having more [y]accurate knowledge concerning the way, deferred them, saying, when Lysias the [z]chief captain is come down, I will determine your matter. And he ordered the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence, and not to hinder any of his [a]friends from ministering to him.

[3] (24 27): Bared before God.

[3] And after certain days, Felix having arrived with Drusilla his* wife, who was a [b]Jewess, sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the [c]faith in Christ [Jesus].† And as he reasoned about [d]righteousness and [e]temperance and the [f]judgment about to come, Felix was [g]ter-

* Many read, "his own." This almost sounds like satire, as though some special claim had to be made for one not truly his.

† Some omit.

v ch. 21. 27.
w *cf.* ch. 25. 11.
x ch. 23. 6. *cf.* ch. 26.6. *cf.*ch.28.20.
y ver. 10. *cf.*ch.26.2,3.
z ch. 23. 26, etc.
a *cf.*ch. 27.3. *cf.* ch.28.10. *cf.* 2 Tim.1. 16-18.
b *cf.*vers.10, 22. *cf.*Mk.6.17, 18.
c *cf.*1Tim.3. 9. *cf.*Gal.1.23.
d *cf.*Rom.1. 18. *cf.* Jno. 16. 8-11.
e *cf.* Eph. 4. 19. *cf.*Gal.5.23, 24.
f *cf.*ch.17.31. *cf.* Rev. 20. 11-15.
g *cf.* Jas. 2. 19.

ctr. ch. 16. 29, 30; *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.

that he had declared that with regard to the resurrection of the dead he was called in question?

There was thus no case to decide; except the accusation were itself the proof. The only righteous judgment would be to discharge the prisoner; but that was too simple a solution of the matter for one who knew of nothing so simple as a bribe, and who had heard of alms and offerings for his people that Paul had had in hand. Spite therefore of his accurate knowledge of the "way," as men styled Christianity (the way indeed of life and peace and holiness), Felix simply defers the case till Lysias should come down, though Lysias' judgment he well knew already, and Lysias does not appear even to have been sent for. Delay until on either side some advantage to be gained by him should help him to see better,—this is for him the only straightforward procedure.

Meanwhile, having no grudge against Paul, and a possible interest in his friends' ministering to him, he has his captivity made as light as possible, and would by no means prevent his friends doing this. God is plainly over it in mercy to His servant, while yet the way out of his prison which Felix would think so easy for him, is absolutely barred.

[3] Nevertheless there is with Felix also a certain desire to hear about the new teaching: and he and Drusilla his wife send for Paul to learn about that faith in Christ Jesus, of which at his trial he had said nothing directly. It were no wonder if he with the life that he had lived should be willing to hear of any way not too costly by which he could be given rest as to a future which for such as he can hardly fail to be more or less a subject of disquiet. But it is no wonder if he find in his quest something graver than he thought. Perhaps he had heard that here was a hope for sinners, though without any real apprehension as to the meaning of sin. Here then is his need; and Paul reasons with him of righteousness and temperance and judgment about to come, until the miserable man is frightened.* But he does not yield. The cost is greater than

*It is hardly necessary to add that the subject matter of Paul's discourse here is personal righteousness, not "the righteousness of God." Righteous was what Felix was not, nor temperate—therefore judgment to come was all he could look forward to. Well might he tremble. There is no account of what else Paul said, more specifically concerning the faith, it is enough to know Felix refused this testimony; how could he receive the gospel?—S. R.

rified, and answered, For the [h]present go thy way; and when I can get an opportunity, I will call thee again. He hoped at the same time that [i]money would be given him by Paul; wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and Felix, desiring to gain [j]favor with the Jews, left Paul bound.

2 (xxv. 1-12): The appeal to Cæsar.

2. Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. And the [k]chief priests and the chiefs of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking as a favor against him that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying [l]wait to kill him on the way. Howbeit Festus answered that Paul was being kept in Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to set out shortly. Let them therefore who are in authority * among you, saith he, go down with me, and if there be in the man [m]anything

h *cf.* ch. 17. 32. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 2.
i *cf.* Jude 16. *ctr.* Rom. 2. 11.
j ch. 25. 9. *cf.* Mk. 15. 15.
k ver. 15.
l *cf.* ch. 23. 12–15.
m ch. 23. 30.

* Or, "able."

he supposed; he must consider it well, and will not come to any hasty decision. He had adjourned Paul's case; he can adjourn his own: "For the present go thy way," he concludes; "when I can get an opportunity, I will call thee again:"—too common an escape to elicit much wonder, though Felix' words have become an every-day quotation. Opportunities come and go; the preacher is at his elbow, and he even sends for him, with an ulterior purpose in it of winning a bribe; but, of course, in vain: the preacher is incorruptible, like divine justice; for two years this goes on; at the end of which he is succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, he leaves Paul bound!

2. Another governor appears in Festus, a name singularly akin to Felix and which means "festive, joyous." The world keeps holiday while the saints suffer. More respectable in character than Felix, he is yet not above desiring to do the Jews a favor at the expense of justice. The chief priests and elders would still get rid by foul means of one against whom they can establish nothing, and solicit Festus that he may be brought to Jerusalem for trial, intending to waylay and kill him on the road. But Festus, guided of God, whatever was his own motive, decides that having been taken to Cæsarea, he shall remain there, and his accusers bring their charges against him there. The trial is a mere repetition of the former one, with the same utter lack of proof. But here the governor's anxiety to please the Jews is shown, even while he knows, as Paul declares, that he had done them no wrong. Paul therefore appeals, according to his right as a Roman citizen, to Cæsar's own judgment and his appeal is admitted. The scene is to shift once more, and the Lord's words to him are to be fulfilled: he is to testify to Him at Rome.

Another question, difficult to answer, has been raised here: Was this appeal according to the mind of God? It is certain that Festus and Agrippa unite to declare a short time after, that it was the only thing that hindered his being set free. This might be looked at as simply the excuse of one who did not want to take the responsibility himself of setting him free, but that it is Agrippa says it. Paul certainly had the assurance also from the Lord that he was to testify at Rome; so that he need not have apprehended anything from the plotting of the Jews. On the other hand, if he were to testify at Rome as at Jerusalem, did not this appeal, in virtue of which he was in fact taken there, seem to him perhaps only the acting in accordance with the divine will? How shall we decide that it was lack of faith, or lack of wisdom on the part of one who surely

amiss, let them accuse him. And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Cæsarea; and on the morrow sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be [n]brought. And when he was come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood round about, bringing many and grievous charges which they [o]could not prove; Paul answering for himself, Neither against the [p]law of the Jews, nor against the [q]temple, nor against [r]Cæsar, have I sinned at all. But Festus, desiring to gain [s]favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? But Paul said, I stand before [s]Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as *thou* also very well knowest. If then I am a [u]wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there is nothing of those things whereof they accuse me, no one can give me up by favor unto them: I [v]appeal unto Cæsar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar; unto Cæsar thou shalt go.

3 (xxv. 13–xxvi. 32): Once again the revelation.

3. Now after some days had passed Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea to salute Festus. And when they had tarried some days there, Festus set

n ver. 23.
o ch. 24. 13.
p *cf.* ch. 21. 21.
q *cf.* ch. 24. 12, 18.
r *cf.* Jno. 19. 12. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22. *cf.* Rom. 13. 1 3.
s *cf.* ch. 24 27. *cf.* Prov. 29. 25.
t *cf.* ch. 23. 30.
u *cf.* ch. 24. 20. *cf.* ch. 18. 14.
v *cf.* ch. 26. 32. *cf.* ch. 28. 19.

exceeded any of us in both respects, and who was in the circumstances as we are not, with more perfect knowledge of all that was implied?

If an appeal to Cæsar were in itself contrary to Christian principle, then, of course, to make it could not be right under any circumstances, or whoever did it. Nor have we any reason to conclude that it was impossible for an apostle to go seriously astray, as we know Peter did. But, as already noticed, Paul elsewhere fully accepts the "powers that be" as those appointed of God to be the ministers of God for good to men, and there seems no difficulty really in his using them for that. If we know not his motive, in the case of one such as he was, it is merely justice to accredit him with the highest.

3. Before the council of the Jews, and in the two presentations of their charges against him, we do not see Paul free as usual to proclaim his theme. He is hindered by the dogged opposition of those he is meeting, and does little more than repel the accusations made against him. We are now, however, once more to hear him proclaim the grace of which he has been the subject, and before a Jewish king also, the last that was to be before they should be scattered over the face of the earth.

Festus, who is in perplexity as to what to signify concerning him when he is sent to Cæsar, takes advantage of the coming of Agrippa to learn more than he has yet been able to do of one about whom the heads of the nation are so much excited, and yet whose main crime seems but to be believing that a man known to have died is alive. Resurrection seems to him to be too foolish a superstition for him to permit himself to say, "alive *again*."

Agrippa, a Jew, is expert in all such questions; and to him therefore he narrates the case that gives him difficulty, which Felix has left upon his hands. Agrippa is interested in another manner, and would be glad to hear the man himself. Festus answers at once that he shall hear him; and a public audience is given next day before which Paul shall plead his cause. Little they think of what it means for all there, the hearing they shall give to this poor prisoner!

Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man [w]left prisoner by Felix, about whom, when I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews laid information, asking for judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the [x]custom for Romans to deliver up any man before that the accused have the accusers [y]face to face, and have had opportunity of defence regarding the complaint. When therefore they came together here, I [z]made no delay, but next day sat down on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such [a]evil things as I supposed, but had certain [b]questions against him of their own religion,* and of a [c]certain Jesus, a dead man,† whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And as I myself was at a loss as to an inquiry into these things, I [d]asked whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged concerning these things. But Paul having [e]appealed to be kept for the decision of Augustus,‡ I

w ch.24. 27. *cf.* ch.26.29.
x vers. 4, 5.
y *cf.* Jno. 7. 51. *cf.* Deut.19. 15-21.
z ver. 6.
a ver. 11.
b *cf.* ch. 18 15, 16. *cf.* ch.23.29
c *cf.* ch. 17. 18, 31, 32. *cf.* ch. 3.15.
d vers. 3, 9.
e ver. 11.

*Or, "superstition." The same word as is applied to the Athenians (chap. xvii. 22)
† Or, "who had died."
‡ This is a title and not a proper name—"The one to be revered." It is not used by Paul, and seems to suggest that worship claimed by the Roman Emperor which will end in the worship of the image of the Beast.

Paul narrates his conversion, very much as he had narrated it to the crowd before the castle-stairs. The value of it is seen in the threefold account which is thus given us in this inspired book where every word is measured. The differences in these several narratives are not great, and in the last two have respect to the very different audience on each occasion. Agrippa is tolerant and not uninterested, with an air of candor, and an expert in all Jewish questions. Scandalous suspicions attached to his life; yet he was the guardian of the temple, and the high priestly office was in his appointment. Paul addresses him with confidence in his knowledge, and in his belief also in the prophets, while the issue shows a certain effect of the apostle's words upon him, a certain accessibility to conviction, of which he appears himself aware, while he shrinks from it.

Behind him Festus is no bad representative of the Roman of his day, sceptical as the mass were, and proud as they could hardly help being. These two not inaptly stood forth as types of the world of that day, in which the cross was to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness,—little as Festus might have in him of the Greek philosopher, whom the apostle in the passage quoted had especially before him.

Behind these again were the heads in war and peace, the chief captains and magistrates, and all the parade and pomp which as needful to his dignity show man to be so little. The prisoner before them is to answer for himself. With him one soon sees that that is the least part of what he thinks of, though this necessarily gives the form to his address; but his testimony as he tells them before long, is very different from any testimony to himself. He is heaven's ambassador, though in bonds; their own condition and not his is that which moves him. Upon him the light has shone which transfigures all things; while they are in the darkness, needing to be turned from it to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Not that there is menace upon his lips, but persuasion: he is beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

The form of his address only adds to its effectiveness; with the chain upon

commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar. And Agrippa [said] unto Festus, I also would [f]desire to hear the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

On the morrow then Agrippa came and Bernice with great [g]pomp, and having entered into the place of audience, with the chief captains* and the [h]principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought. And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men that are present with us here, ye [i]behold this man, about whom the whole multitude of the Jews applied to me both in Jerusalem and here, crying out against him that he ought not to live any longer. But I, having found that he had done [j]nothing worthy of death, and he himself having [k]appealed unto Augustus, I decided to send him. Of whom I have no [l]certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him before you, and specially before thee, king Agrippa, so that after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me [m]unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to signify the charges against him.

f *cf.* Lk. 23. 8, 9.

g *cf.* Matt. 10. 18, 19.
h *cf.* Dan. 3. 2.

i *cf.* Jno. 19. 5.
cf. Phil. 3. 10.

j ch. 23. 29. ch. 26. 31.
k ver. 11.
l *cf.* vers. 19, 20.

m *cf.* Jno. 7. 51.
cf. ch. 28. 17, 18.

* Or, "Chiliarchs."

his wrist, the guerdon that the world has given him for service done to it, the witness to them all of how fully he has accepted the costs of his great office. They may count him mad, but the fire in his eyes is true and steadfast, and fed by no fuel that their world can furnish;—a man who is beyond and inaccessible to them plainly; whose only wish for them—the highest he can wish them—is that they may just be as he is, except those bonds!

He begins with what the Jews in general knew, if only they cared to testify as to it, that he had been himself a Pharisee, one of the strictest sect in Judaism, the zealots of their religion. Now he was being judged, and by Jews! for the very hope which was their national one, secured by the promise of God unto their fathers, and which all their* twelve tribes confessed as their own; earnestly serving God in this assurance! How full of self-contradiction is man, and especially the religious man, in whom yet the power of the truth has not broken down the pride of nature, so as to bring into real subjection to it. Christ was indeed the fulfillment of God's glorious promise, and in a more wonderful way than could have been anticipated by the firmest believer in what was the burden of the prophets. They had slain Him for the very claim He made (in every possible way confirmed) to fulfil this. And when, after the accomplishment of their awful will, the issue proved to have been overruled of God for fullest blessing, and His loving mercy, with increased evidence and miraculous attestation, was announced for their acceptance, they had still met it with malignant opposition, and slaughter of the messengers. Why but because they could not humble themselves to receive grace as grace?

Thus Paul the Pharisee was condemned by Pharisees for faith in the fulfilment of their chiefest hope; his testimony also including that of resurrection, which the Pharisees confessed, and yet refused. But "why," he asks, "should

* Paul includes all Israel. Faith never recognizes anything short of God's thoughts, and Paul here, as James in his epistle, includes all the Israel of God. The nation, to be sure, was scattered and to all appearances irretrievably destroyed, but as Elijah builds God's altar of 12 stones, so Paul here, speaking for the remnant, looks forward to the restoration of blessing to the nation on the basis of resurrection: "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (Hos. vi. 2). In the Revelation we see the 12,000 sealed from each tribe.—S. R.

And Agrippa said unto Paul, It is permitted thee to [n] speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched out his hand, and answered for himself;—*

Concerning all things of which I am accused by the Jews, king Agrippa, I count myself [o] happy that I am to answer for myself before thee to-day; especially because thou art acquainted with all [p] customs and questions that are among the Jews. Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My [q] manner of life then from my youth, which was from the beginning among my nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who [r] know me from the beginning, if they be willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a [s] Pharisee. And now I stand to be judged for the [t] hope of the promise

n *cf.* ch.22.1, etc.

o *cf.* Lk. 21. 12–15.

p *cf.* ch. 24. 10.

q ch. 22. 3.

r *cf.* Gal. 1. 13.

s *cf.* ch.23.6. *cf.* Phil.3.5, 6.

t *cf.*ch.13.32. *cf.* ch.28.20.

*Or, "made his defence."

it be thought an incredible thing by you, if God raiseth the dead?" He appeals against the unbelief which constantly assumes to ground itself upon reason, to reason itself. Admit a God who once created all things, and the credibility of resurrection becomes merely a question of satisfactory testimony to it.

God had overthrown in his own case an opposition which exceeded. With him the call of duty itself urged him against every follower of the Nazarene; and beyond the land he pursued them in his madness to foreign cities. He was the apostle of Jewish hatred, with commission from the religious leaders of the people, when at midday, in the midst of his company, and in active prosecution of his self-sought mission, that took place which had changed all for him henceforth. Heaven from its home of light poured forth a radiance brighter than the sun—brightness not darkness, and not a vision of terror, though human strength collapsed under it; and prostrate on the earth, he heard from the glory revealed One who spoke in the tongue of the old revelation, and to him with familiar knowledge, Himself unknown: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?* It is hard for thee to kick against the goads."*

How completely is grace joined with the authority which manifestly belongs to the glorious Speaker! and how unanswerable the question which might have been a sentence, but which seeks only the soul's judgment of itself! Saul can plead, what indeed he afterwards declares to be the only ground upon which mercy could have been shown him, the ignorance which was nevertheless the result of unbelief. "And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

How wondrous a revolution in a few moments of time, from the fanatic pride of the legalist to the consciousness of one who is chief of sinners; from the ardent hunter down of Christians to the earnest disciple of Christ! How must the apostle have questioned, with his eyes upon the assemblage, whether the Lord were not revealing Himself in like manner to some there who were traveling with him as he spoke, to the place of unexpected meeting. And immediately he goes on to declare his commission to all such, as servant of this same Jesus, and witness of the things which then and afterwards he had learned of Him.

The next words define the new place of the Christian, taken out from Israel and from the Gentiles alike, to the latter of whom Paul is distinctly sent. It

* This last expression seems to suggest that the goad had been long applied, and that Paul had been resisting. Was not Stephen's address a goad which Paul had resisted, and his testimony to the Lord's being at the right hand of God? Surely these and doubtless the patience and the testimonies of many whom he had persecuted were divinely intended as goads for his conscience. But he had resisted all till this overwhelming testimony made it impossible to do so any longer.—S. R.

made of God unto our fathers; unto which our [u] twelve tribes, earnestly serving* night and day, hope to arrive, for which hope I am accused by Jews, O king! [v] Why is it judged incredible by you, if God raiseth the dead? I indeed [w] thought with myself that I ought to do many things in opposition to the Name of Jesus the Nazarene; which too I [x] did in Jerusalem; and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received the [y] authority from the chief priests, and [z] when they were put to death I gave my vote;† and often punishing them in all the synagogues, I [a] forced them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly [b] mad against them, I persecuted them even as far as to foreign cities.

Whereupon, as I [c] journeyed to Damascus with [d] authority and commission from the chief priests, at [e] midday on the way I saw, O king, a [f] light from heaven, [g] above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and those who journeyed with me. And when we were all [h] fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the [i] Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is [j] hard for thee to kick against goads. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the

* The word suggests God as its object.
† This word suggests the character of the vote; "gave against."

[u] *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 30, 31. *cf.* Rev. 7. 4–8.
[v] *cf.* ch. 17. 32. *cf.* Rom. 4. 18–25. *cf.* Heb. 11. 19.
[w] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
[x] ch. 22. 4, etc.
[y] ch. 9. 1, 2.
[z] ch. 8. 1. ch. 22. 20.
[a] *cf.* ch. 18. 6. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
[b] ch. 9. 1.
[c] ch. 9. 3.
[d] ch. 9. 2.
[e] ch. 22. 6. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.
[f] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6.
[g] *cf.* Lk. 9. 29.
[h] *cf.* Job 42. 5, 6.
[i] *cf.* ch. 22. 2. *cf.* Rom. 8. 15 with Heb. 2. 11, 16, 17.
[j] *cf.* ch. 7. 51.

has been said that Paul was in fact taken out of Israel only, and not out of the nations; and that the thought therefore must be, as in the common version, that of delivering rather; but if he were taken out from Israel, it was important to say that this was not to give him the mere position of a Gentile. There might seem to be but the one or other, but the Christian has another and heavenly place, as on earth simply that of a pilgrim and a stranger. "They are not of the world," says the Lord of His disciples, "even as I am not of the world;" and how important for the one sent into it as the messenger of Christ to maintain this.

The purpose of the message is "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light." Light is come into the world; and although He who was the Light of it when in it is gone out of it again, rejected by it, yet the light streams now from an open heaven, in principle as Paul saw it. Thus men have only to have their eyes opened to see it too. Here is their responsibility, and here too is their guilt, that they love the darkness as in our Lord's time, because their deeds are evil. Evil ever craves the cover of darkness; and there is one in the world,—alas, the prince of it,—who is ready effectually to blind the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Cor. iv. 4). So the Lord adds here, "that they may turn from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me."

If there were a weary heart under any of those brilliant masks which the apostle's hearers wore that day, the account with its appealing commentary, the man himself, should surely have touched them. The glory of that grace, with its remission and sanctification—all man's need met at once by faith in Him who had lifted this Saul the persecutor indeed into another sphere unknown to Jew or Gentile, was a thing unique, and which as yet had lost by repetition nothing of its freshness. He goes on to the effect upon himself, which was as lasting as it was immediate. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and the nations round were witnesses of that.

Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou [k]persecutest. But [l]arise, and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared to thee, to [m]appoint thee a servant* and a witness, both of the things which thou [n]hast seen, and of those wherein I [o]will appear to thee, [p]taking thee out from the people and from the Gentiles unto [q]whom I send thee, to [r]open their eyes, that they may turn from [s]darkness unto light, and from the [t]power of Satan unto God, that they may receive [u]remission of sins, and [v]inheritance among them that are [w]sanctified by faith in me. Whereupon, king Agrippa, I was [x]not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but brought the message [y]first to those at Damascus, as well as [z]Jerusalem, and [a]through all the country of Judea, and to the [b]Gentiles, that they should [c]repent and [d]turn to God, [e]doing works worthy of repentance. For this cause the Jews [f]seized me in the temple, and attempted to slay me. Having therefore obtained the [g]help that is from God, I stand unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying nothing beside what the [h]prophets and Moses said should come, [as to] whether Christ should [i]suffer; whether he first by [j]resurrection of the dead should proclaim [k]light [l]both to the people and to the Gentiles.

k ch. 22. 7, 8. cf. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13.
l cf. Rev. 1. 17.
m ch. 9. 15.
n ver. 13.
o cf. 2 Cor. 12. 1–4. cf. Eph. 3. 3.
p cf. ch. 15. 14.
q cf. Gal. 1. 15, 16. cf. ch. 13. 46.
r cf. Is. 42. 7 cf. 1 Pet. 2. 9.
s cf. Col. 1. 12, 13.
t cf. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
u cf. ch. 13. 38, 39. cf. Eph. 1. 7.
v cf. ch. 20. 32. cf. Eph. 1. 11. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 4.
w cf. ch. 15. 9. cf. 1 Cor. 6. 11. cf. Heb. 13 12.
x cf. ch. 5. 32 with Rom. 1. 5.
y ch. 9. 20.
z ch. 9. 28, 29. cf. ch. 22. 17–21.

* Ὑπηρέτης, an official servant.

a cf. ch. 15. 3. b cf. ch. 14. 24, 25; cf. ch. 16. 6–10, etc; cf. Rom. 15. 18, 19. c cf. ch. 17. 30. d cf. 1 Thess. 1. 9; cf. ch. 20. 21. e Matt. 3. 8; cf. ch. 19. 18–20. f ch. 21. 27, etc. g cf. 1 Cor. 15. 10; cf. 2 Cor. 12. 9. h ch. 13. 27; cf. Rom. 3. 21. i cf. ch. 17. 3 with Is. 53. 4–6. j cf. 1 Cor. 15. 12–19; cf. Rom. 4. 25. k cf. Lk. 2. 32; ver. 18. l cf. Rom. 1. 16; cf. Rom. 3. 29, 30.

The effect would be in souls repentant, turning to God, and in works answerable to repentance.

Here was the whole matter for which he was accused; for this the Jews had seized, and would have slain him. Yet what he witnessed was only the fulfilment of what Moses and the prophets said should come: the decision of the question of a Christ that was to suffer, and of His resurrection bringing light to Israel and to the nations.

It should be evident that the apostle does not mean that the revelation made to him was merely within the bounds of the older one. The things that are in his mind are summed up in the two points following, which he names. It is certain that there were mysteries now being revealed which had been kept secret during all time before, as that of the Church as the Body of Christ, which no Old Testament scripture even hints at. Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were already written more than two years when Paul said this. It is not the truth that Christianity is but an illuminated edition of Old Testament revelation; nor is it the truth that the distinctive features of Christianity had not yet been made known. It is not therefore the truth that the apostle means to say this. Both things have been inferred from the closing words here; but both are entirely wrong as to the foundation facts of which Paul is professedly speaking; *they* are indeed borne witness to by all Scripture from beginning to end.

Festus at this point breaks in with the loud confident voice of one who has heard enough, and is prepared with his verdict. With Roman haughtiness he conceives all this to be the superstition of a Jew, the dream of a man addicted to too much reading. Much learning, to his practical mind, when gained in such by-paths of knowledge, might naturally lead to madness. But Paul replies with a quiet and respectful appeal to the better knowledge of the Jewish king;

And as he thus answered for himself, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art [m]mad; much learning is turning thee around to madness. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak plainly words of truth and soberness. For the king is [n]acquainted with these things, unto whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for it is not a thing done in a [o]corner. King Agrippa, [p]believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa [said] unto Paul, With [q]little [effort] thou art prevailing to make me a Christian! And Paul [said], I [r]would to God that with little or with much, not only thou, but all that have heard me this day might become such as I also am, [s]except these bonds.

And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them; and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth [t]nothing worthy of death or bonds. And [u]Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

m *cf.* ch. 2. 13. *cf.* ch.17.18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13.
n ver. 3.
o *cf.*ch.10.36 -43.
p *cf.* Jno. 5. 45–47.
q *cf.* ch. 24. 25. *cf.* Mk. 12. 34.
r *cf.*1 Thess. 2. 8. *cf.*Gal.4.12.
s *cf.*Col.4.18. *cf.*2 Tim.2. 9.
t ch. 23. 29.
u *cf.* ver 28.

in whose presence he had been speaking therefore freely. Neither the scriptures nor the facts of the life and death of Jesus could be hid from one so well known for his interest in Jewish affairs as king Agrippa. These things had been done before the whole people, in Jerusalem their chief city, and not in a corner. And the prophets were there to answer for themselves. He concludes by a bold appeal to the king himself to make known the belief which he is sure he has in them: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Doubtless the apostle saw that a powerful impression had been made upon the king, whose words in answer, with all their lightness, seem to deprecate being pressed further at this time. If on the one hand we cannot take them to be a confession of even half-conviction, yet they do seem a half-apology for saying no more. "With little effort thou art prevailing to make me a Christian," leaves it still doubtful what a further effort might accomplish. But the more really touched he is, the more he would shrink from showing it before such an assemblage as this, while yet he is not broken down to self-forgetfulness. He seems not to have command enough over himself to say what an orthodox Jew could easily have done, that he *does* believe the prophets. He puts the whole question off in a way that most would think was simply banter, and which he might be glad to have taken for it, and which yet might be but a nervous plea for escape at this time. And the apostle sends after him in his retreat that memorable sigh of prayer, large enough to enfold the whole company among whom he would fain be hidden, "I would to God that with little effort or much, not only thou, but all that have heard me this day might become such as I also am,—except these bonds!"

No more effectual pleading could there be, with Agrippa as with all beside, than just this overflow of a heart so full that it cares to hide nothing! so pledged to and joyous in the truth to which it is pledged, that it need not and cannot refrain from the outpouring of its delight, in the longing that all men might share with him the plenteous blessing which chains could not restrain, though he could not wish these to any! There is no need to come between it and the reader with a comment which might rather lessen than bring home the power of that which interprets itself as the spontaneous testimony to a heart that divine grace has at once enlarged and filled to the overflow. The effect is immediate. The king rises up, as if he would not care to face a longer audience;

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chaps. xxvii., xxviii.)

The way and the end: conditions and exercises.

1 (xxvii.): Man's will and God's rule.

1. AND when it was [v]determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a [w]centurion named Julius, of the Augustan cohort. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the places on the [x]coast of Asia, we put to sea, [y]Aristarchus a Macedonian of Thessalonica being with us. And the next day we arrived at [z]Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and

[v] ch. 25. 12.
[w] *cf.* ch. 10. 1.
[x] *ctr.* ch. 20. 16. *cf.* Jon. 1. 3.
[y] ch. 19. 29. *cf.* Jno. 14. 16.
[z] *cf.* ch. 21. 3-7.

and the whole company is dispersed. It is not saying too much, certainly, according to the evidence, but if the people are to be considered who pronounce the judgment, it is yet a testimony to the truth, that "they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." Agrippa adds to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." But who knows? Agrippa might safely say this: *he* was not governor of a people so well able to make trouble for him, as the men of Judea might prove to be for Festus; and if Cæsar's judgment seat were more what Paul calls it afterwards, "the mouth of the lion," than the abode of justice, all the more would the Roman desire that Paul should test this rather than himself. There cannot be a doubt that the safe and happy prisoner was better prepared to do so than his judge; his case being after all in higher hands. The appeal was for the governor a not unfortunate circumstance. Paul goes on in peace whither God guides.

SUBD. 5.

With the apostle's voyage to Rome the book of the Acts ends. The strangeness of such an ending has been often commented upon, and naturally; especially for those who imagine a history of progress on to final triumph for the Church on earth. We expect some correspondence between the history at large and this its specimen page; and to end with a shipwreck and the apostle of the Gentiles in a Roman prison gives an impression of an unfinished fragment instead of the perfect workmanship of the divine hand. But this proceeds from a wrong conception of what the Church's course was in fact to be, which all the sorrow and disaster of near nineteen centuries has for many been incompetent to remove. Allow the Scripture-statements their full weight, and the want of correspondence will be no longer felt: for the history is really that of a shipwreck and a prison; and instead of wondering any longer at the apparent contrast, we shall perhaps suspect that the similarity may be closer than it seems, and begin asking ourselves if the one is not indeed an allegory of the other.

The very name of Rome to us at the close of so many long years as have passed is predictive of disaster. Rome has through all its existence as a dominant world-power antagonized the gospel. Submit to it it never really did. It took the name of Christian, but as a symbol of material conquest and political dominion; and thereby dragged in the dust what professedly it exalted. As already said, it was judaized rather than Christianized, and with the Jewish spirit of legality drank in its bitter animosity to the gospel. The spirit of Rome was indeed always legal; but this legality now became ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, hierarchical, and necessarily persecuting. Begin Paul's captivity it did not, for it never knew him but as a prisoner. But keep him prisoner it did, until the time of God's release came. The picture does not go as far as this; probably for the reason that after all this never has been,—never will be—complete; while what has taken place in this way is the mere mercy of God, and for us the instruction is in the causes leading to the disaster: causes which are still at work, and in which we may have part, if we do not avert it by self-judgment.

1. There are two parts in this account, the first of which consists of the voyage and shipwreck, ending with the reaching land at Melita or Malta. Here also

permitted him to go to his [a]friends and have attention paid him. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of [b]Cyprus, because the winds were [c]contrary. And having sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came unto Myra, [a city] of [d]Lycia; and there the centurion found a ship of [e]Alexandria sailing for Italy, and put us on board. And sailing slowly many days, and having with [f]difficulty got abreast of Cnidus, the wind not [further] suffering us, we sailed under the lee of [g]Crete abreast of Salmone; and coasting it with difficulty, we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near to which was the city of Lasæa. And much time being spent, and the voyage being now [h]dangerous because the [i]Fast was already past, Paul [j]admonished them, saying, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our [k]lives.

a ch. 24. 23. *cf.* ch. 28. 15, 16.
b *cf.* ch. 15. 39. *cf.* Gal. 2. 18 with Josh. 6. 26.
c *cf.* ch. 16. 6, 7. *ctr.* ch. 16. 11.
d *cf.* Matt. 7. 15.
e *cf.* Gal. 1. 4. *cf.* ch. 7. 39.
f ver. 4.
g *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 14–18.
h *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1.
i *cf.* Lev. 16. 29–31. *cf.* Gal. 4. 10.
j *cf.* ch. 20. 28–31. *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 14.
k *cf.* vers. 24, 42–44; *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 11 with 2 Tim. 2. 12, 13.

there are two parts: the first, that in the ship of Adramyttium to Myra; the second, that in the ship of Alexandria, wrecked at Malta. The conflict of man's will with God's rule appears all through, though most conspicuously in the second part. The detail given all through should surely show us the interest that it should have for us, and that there is more in it by far than appears upon the surface.

All through Paul is a prisoner; and yet with the clear vindication of the judge from any charge which should make him rightly this. Finally he is shown to be the one to whom God has given the lives of all that sail with him. If we see in him the representative of the truth for which he stands, there can be in this no perversion of fact; and the sorrowful fact is that the truth of the gospel for which he stood has been, almost from the beginning of the Church's history until we reach the full development of the system which has Rome for its head, as it were shut up, without formal accusation perhaps, yet fettered, and scarce permitted speech; professing Christians being its courteous guard like Julius here, with a certain honor for Paul, but not freedom. Indeed Julius himself has not his choice in this: he is under authority, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, an instrument of the world power simply, and to whom in those interests with which he is identified, Paul is simply a stranger.

The meaning of his name may be variously given; that which would have significance of the kind that we are looking for, would be derived from "julus," a wheatsheaf, and might thus be "belonging to the wheatsheaf;" an enigma, no doubt, as we might expect: all here is necessarily enigmatical; but it is not impossible to penetrate the disguise.

Christ in resurrection is the significance of the one sheaf of wheat which stands out prominently in connection with the types. The sheaf of firstfruits, presented to God between Passover and Pentecost, occupies a remarkable place in that series of feasts which we easily see to be specially related to Christian truths. Christ in resurrection was also, as we know, the basis of the gospel; and in a pre-eminent way, of Paul's gospel. It is Paul's gospel that specially identifies all believers with that wheatsheaf presented to God,—that is, with Christ gone up to Him. If Julius in such an allegorized history as we are taking this to be, represents in fact, as has already been suggested, those who, even while they might be true believers in Christ, yet were ignorant of those priceless truths with which the apostle of the Gentiles was identified, and who could thus hold the truth shut up, as it were in captivity, then the implications of the name he bore would be indeed significant. They who themselves had that Christian place of identification with the risen Christ which Paul's doctrine

But the centurion believed the [l]master and ship-owner rather than the things said by Paul; and the harbor being ill-suited to winter in, the [m]majority advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they might reach Phœnix to winter in, a harbor of Crete looking north-east and south-east. And the south wind blowing [n]softly, supposing they had gained their object, they weighed anchor and sailed close in shore along Crete. But not long after there beat down it a [o]tempestuous wind that is called Euraquilo; and when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way and were [p]driven. And running under the lee of a small island called Clauda, we were able with difficulty to secure the boat; and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, [q]under-girding the ship; and fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. And as we

l ctr. Phil.3. 3.
cf. 1 Ki. 12. 6-15.
m cf. Ex.23. 2.
*cf.*2 Chron. 18. 1-27.
n ch. 28. 13.
cf. Rev. 2. 12-17.
*cf.*Prov.14. 12.
o cf. Jno. 6. 16-18.
cf. Ps. 107. 23-28.
*cf.*Jonah 1. 4, 5.
p cf Jas.1.6.
ctr. Rev 3. 11.
*q cf.*Gal.3.3
*cf.*1 Chron. 13. 7.
ctr. Eph.4. 3, 4, 15, 16.

made so conspicuous, were yet in ignorance of the place and what belonged to it; that is, of Paul in the truth he carried; and however courteous to himself they might be, were but the instruments (yea, the imperial band) of the enemies of the truth he lived and died for. Look at the imperial band of the church fathers: do they not treat the apostle after this manner? Are they not just so many courteous Juliuses in this way?

They are bound for Italy, all these; though it may well be, not by a straight road. The first ship we find here is not going to Italy, but to the coast of Asia, and is a ship of Adramyttium—a name of which there is doubt as to the meaning, but it seems as if it might mean that "one must not haste," while Asia speaks of a "miry" shore. Spiritually at least, these things go well together. A lack of earnest diligence in the way is apt enough to have a slough for its terminus. Corinth had got so mired with the world at a very early date, though they knew little of it: they were reigning as kings, following their wills, as such a course implies, and not the guidance of the Spirit. The "best Ruler," as Aristarchus means, was with them all the way through, but we hear of him no more: he is a *passenger* and only that. Yet, as the Macedonian may remind us, He is the Spirit of worship, which putting God in His place is seen as of Thessalonica too, the means of "victory over that which brings into commotion." But so the start is made.

The next day they are at Zidon, still in what is properly Israelitish territory, though in fact in other hands. It means "taking the prey," and in Joshua's time we find it coming into Asher's portion (chap. xix. 28, see notes), and there with reference to victory over evil, which is indeed the portion of Asher, the "happy" saint. But in fact, as we know, in the common failure of Israel, Asher never did even conquer Zidon, which had many and great kings of its own, some of whom were in alliance with Israel afterwards. The "taking of prey," so connected, would come to have a different meaning, and imply such a career of conquest as that upon which, when become conscious of her power, the Church soon started. The victory over the world which faith in the Son of God gives became exchanged for victory by which the things of the world became the possession of the victors. Thus the parable of the mustard-seed began to be fulfilled, and the church to take rank among the powers of the world. Friends of Paul were still to be found, for whom victory over the world retained the old and contrasted principle of separation from it, crucifixion to it by the Cross. With these the apostle would still find communion, and hearts drawn to him.

But the ship of Adramyttium is bound for Asia; and starting again, the winds are contrary, and she is forced under the lee of Cyprus. Cyprus means blossom, especially of the olive and the vine, and became identified in the

labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began a [r]clearance overboard; and the third day they [s]cast out with their own hands the furniture* of the ship. And when neither [t]sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lying on us, at last all hope that we should be saved was taken away. And when they had been long [u]without food, then Paul stood forth in their midst and said, Sirs, ye should have [v]hearkened to me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have got this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good [w]courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, [x]only of the ship. For an angel of the God [y]whose I am and whom I [z]serve stood by me this night saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must [a]stand before Cæsar; and behold, God hath [b]granted thee all who sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good courage; for I [c]believe God that it shall be as it hath been spoken to me. Howbeit we must be [d]cast upon a certain island.

*Or, "tackling."

r Jonah 1.5. *cf.* ver. 38. *cf.* Heb. 5. 12.
s *cf.* Eph. 4. 11, 12.
t *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 5. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 19.
u *cf.* Rev. 3. 17. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 2. 2.
v vers. 9, 10. *cf.* Rev. 3. 19.
w vers. 25, 36. *cf.* ch. 16. 28.
x ver. 41. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 15.
y *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.
z *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2.
a ch. 23. 11.
b *cf.* Gen. 18. 26, etc. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 16.
c *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.
d ch. 28. 1. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.

Grecian mind with what is fair and lovely in nature, with Venus and her worship, the soft influences which woo and win man's heart. And here indeed is how the heart, realizing that after all the winds for the Christian voyager are contrary, would shelter itself under what in nature it can plead, and with truth also, God has made for man's enjoyment. So He has; and yet how easy to make enticement of it, the ship using it as her shelter to reach the "miry" shores of Asia beyond! How all this fits together in the picture here! Was not this in fact the history of declension in the Church of God? a history so often repeated in individual experience that we cannot but know it all too well!

Not difficult is it to understand that beyond this there are dangers, which Cilicia. Pamphylia, Lycia, all in different ways express. Cilicia is said to mean "which rolls, or overturns," and to play the Cilician is to be cruel and treacherous like these. Pamphylia would mean a union of various tribes; and their history seems to correspond with this. Lycia is from lycus, a wolf, which whether referring to beast or man has no encouraging significance. In two of these names the dangers following the thirst for pleasure may be fitly indicated; the relaxation which it implies exposing to such dangers as the apostle speaks of to the Ephesians as the entering in of grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; while the union of various tribes was truly what practically the church soon came to be as mingling with the world's various interests affected and moulded it, making the diversity as apparent as the uniting tie. How soon did the Body of Christ cease to have visible expression; and the church united with the world become divided within itself!

Striking it is that here presently the end is reached of the first voyage at Myra. where the ship of Adramyttium is exchanged for another. If Pamphylia has the import which we see in it, the breaches of unity which it pictures would have need of the "ointment" of which Myra speaks. How many salves have been sought for this broken condition! And the change of ship for a ship of Alexandria is still more plainly significant. Alexandria speaks of help given to men, or better, of the warding off from them impending danger. The new ship of the church is a human means adapted to that end, while openly pointing now towards Italy.

Notice how well all of this agrees together: the perils have been shown us, following self-indulgence and love of pleasure. The new vessel from Egypt,

But when the [e]fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the Adriatic, about midnight the sailors surmised that we were drawing near some country. And they sounded and found twenty fathoms; and having gone a little further and sounding again, they found fifteen fathoms; and fearing lest we should be [f]cast away on rocky places, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for [g]day. And as the [h]sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under pretext of being about to lay out anchors from the prow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, *ye* cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the [j]boat, and let her fall off. And when day was about coming on, Paul [k]exhorted them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I exhort you to take some food,

e vers.20,33.
f ver. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim.1. 19.
g *cf.*1 Jno.1. 5.
h *cf.* ver. 42 *ctr.* ver.24.
i *cf.*Heb.3.6.
j *cf.* ver. 16. *cf.* Gen. 19. 20. *cf.* Ju. 1.25, 26.
k *ctr.* 1 Sa. 28. 22–25.

which stands all through Scripture for that independence of God, alas, how natural, and from Alexandria,—a human device for warding off danger,—and now with her course directly Romeward, towards which in fact, indirectly, they have been going all the time,—all this surely speaks to us not uncertainly in what we have upon other grounds concluded to be an allegory of the Church. Most undeniably, for all who take their view from Scripture, the vessel of God's testimony has changed much since it came from His hands at the first; and there has been human shaping, taking its justification from expediency largely,—the warding off of dangers, real or imaginary. The simple eldership of the apostles' days has grown into an episcopate, more and more monarchical; and this into archiepiscopates and patriarchates, and from ministry to priesthood, and all the ranks of a hierarchy conspicuously absent from the New Testament original. The "best Ruler" is little seen, and a mere passenger: there would be danger indeed in letting the blessed Spirit have that governing place which, at the beginning, was His. We have taken a fresh start clearly, and our vessel is Egyptian—Alexandrian; and we are manifestly on our way to Rome.

But still the wind is contrary; heaven does not vouchsafe its favors for some reason; and it is with difficulty, and after many days of sailing that the vessel is got abreast of Cnidus. Cnidus means "chafing, nettling," and may be a bad augury for the new regime; and here they leave the coast of Asia for Crete.

The wind, still contrary, forces them to take refuge under the lee of Crete abreast of Salmone, a name which, like that of Salamis in Cyprus, seems to be derived from the breaking of the waves upon it. That of Crete seems to be derived from the Cherethim of the Old Testament, who in the judgment of many were its inhabitants. The meaning in that case would not be doubtful. The cherethim were the "cutters down, or cutters off," sometimes given as "executioners." But the word was also very commonly applied to the making or "cutting" of a covenant, for which as a whole sometimes the one word stood. That the covenant of the Lord should connect itself with the cutting off of evil can be no mystery to us; and significant it is that it is in turning from the "miry" shores of Asia that Crete presents itself to us. Self-judgment would have been indeed the resource for the Church bemired with the world, and it is no wonder that it should present "Fair Havens" to the buffeted ship, or that the apostle's advice should be to winter there. Final rest indeed it could not be, but yet quite helpful against winter storm; but the ship of Alexandria, under the guidance of those belonging to it, will not stay there; and Julius of the imperial band, while courteous enough to the apostle, yet approves their

for this is for your safety; for there shall not a [t]hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, he took bread, and gave [m] thanks to God before all, and brake it, and began to eat. And they all were of good courage, and themselves also took food. And we were two hundred and seventy-six, [n] all the souls that were in the ship. And having satisfied themselves with food, they [o] lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they perceived a certain bay with a [p] beach, upon which they took counsel if they could drive the ship. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the lashings of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the [q] wind, they made for the beach. And falling into a place where [r] two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the bow stuck fast, and remained immovable, but the stern began to break up with the violence [of the waves].* And the [s] soldiers' counsel was that they

t *cf.* Matt. 10. 30. *cf.* Lk. 21. 18.
m *cf.* Jno. 6. 11.
n ver. 44.
o *cf.* ver. 18. *ctr.* Eph. 3. 8.
p *cf.* vers. 12, 22.
q ver. 15. *cf.* Eccl. 11. 5.
r *cf.* ch. 23. 6–10.
s ver. 30.

*Some omit.

choice. Alexandria seems a name peculiarly significant here, and the history of the church shows here indeed how the notion of "Crete" that came from Alexandria would be in grave enough contrast with the apostle's. "Cutting off" in the shape of asceticism, and even in a covenant form, had indeed its home there. Monasticism in its pseudo-Christian form arose there: a direct descent from heathen principles and practice. "Fair Havens," with its city of the Rock (as Lasæa seems to mean) near by, did not suit with the ideal of the Alexandrians as Phenice did. Phenice means "palm," the constant figure of the righteous. Righteousness is not after all found in cutting off, and the city of the Rock intimates the corrective truth, distasteful naturally to the true ascetic. Its ideal is in this way unattainable; and when, mocked by the softness of a favorable south wind, the vessel leaves the harbor that would have saved it, the storm-blast Euroclydon descends upon it, and it is blown out irrevocably from all land.

The wind that now assails the ship is called in most manuscripts Euroclydon, but in the oldest Euraquilo. The one term means "the eastern wave," referring to the effect upon the water. The latter, the "north-easter;" which has the sanction of most of the editors. The east, as we have seen elsewhere, is the quarter that speaks simply of adversity; the north is that which speaks of darkness, mystery, and spiritual evil. Taking Euraquilo as the best-attested reading, we find it also to be the most significant. It speaks not merely of adversity, but of Satanic influence: in the case of the Church, besides persecution, of evil doctrine; and such were in fact the influences which assailed the early Christians. In the epistle to Smyrna, which stands second in that apocalyptic series in which many have learned to trace the successive stages of the Church's history, we have on the one hand the ten days of tribulation, the persecution under the Roman emperors, and on the other the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Doubtless these work together, as the shout of the hunters, which drives the deer into the trap prepared. Judaism, as we know, favored that fusion with the world as well as those defensive methods which promised best for protection from outside attack; while it was itself the most complete attack upon the vitals of Christianity. And the same two influences are, no doubt, to be seen here in the storm that hunts the Alexandrian vessel to its wreck. We must distinguish, of course, carefully,

should kill the prisoners, lest any one should swim out and escape; but the centurion, [t] desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose, and commanded that those that could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; and the rest, some on [u] planks, and some on things from the ship. And so it came to pass that all got safe to land.

[t] *cf.* ver. 3.

[u] *cf.* Jude 22, 23.

between that worldly prosperity into which, through all the assaults upon it, the church was steadily rising, and the spiritual wreck to which in this very way it was going on; until under Constantine its pilgrim and heavenly character was exchanged for an opposite one; and the gospel of grace, except perhaps with a few hidden and hunted men, was well nigh gone from the earth. We have the creed of these orthodox Nicene days, and the faith of their most eminent men in various expression, and we know with exactness what they held and taught; their doctrine as to Christ, in general orthodox enough,—as to the gospel, what the extremest ritualism may permit of it: baptism to wash away past sins, and make children of God; penance and priestly absolution, to take away sins afterward; helped, and needing to be helped, by the virtues of the saints, and even their dead bones! That was for the people of ordinary lives; but the religious life, which alone made saints, was to be found in following out what Scripture calls "the doctrines of demons, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Tim. iv. 1–3.) This life too was to be spent in deserts, or between monastery or convent walls; and then might attain merit which would help to save other people,—the merit of doing more than it is one's duty to do.

If scripture in hand we place ourselves in the midst of that flourishing church of the Nicene period, which the hand of Constantine has just liberated from the dungeon to put it upon the throne,—and look at it with the eyes of him who said to the Corinthians. "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without us*" (1 Cor. iv. 8), we shall no doubt see that, spite of all the seeming prosperity, there has been in fact a change and a loss, such as would imply no less than a shipwreck; while the "honey" of nature's sweetness enjoyed might make a Melita for the released sufferers. Into the details of the 14 days of storm and drift it is harder to enter by way of exposition. The lack of food we can understand, while yet the wheat was in the ship; the fact of the safety of the voyagers depending upon that Paul whom yet they knew so little; his voice being heard once more as the storm worked on to imminent disaster: surely ears must have been opened to hear it! The shore was won, though the ship had gone to pieces; there was a pause in the progress towards Rome, and a new ship must be found to get there, though of the same Egyptian, Alexandrian build; and then by easier stages, and with fairer weather the end will soon be reached.* †

* The details of "the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul" have been fully examined by Mr. Smith, of Jordanhill, in a well known volume, from which all commentaries since have necessarily borrowed. On this account, and because detail of this kind is outside the purpose and scope of the present work, I have omitted mention of it. He has fully shown the exactness of knowledge which the whole narrative displays, both of the topography of the voyage, and of the navigation of the Ancients. I pass it over with this reference.

† There are many details in the narrative which are doubtless as suggestive of spiritual meaning as those given in the notes. What was the boat, which there was so much difficulty in getting at? What was the small island which proved a temporary shelter? No doubt the helps with which the ship was undergirded suggest the similar means which have been so popular in all ages of holding together from the outside that which has not strength in itself to withstand the storms. Human methods may hold the ship together for a while, but they are but human expedients and tell the tale of weakness most unmistakably. The tackling of the ship points to what might be called the machinery of church life. How often in storms must this tackling prove itself but a menace to safety. No light from heaven shines upon the stormtossed ship, for they had embarked upon a course of disobedience.—S. R.

2 (xxviii.1-15): The journey on.

2. And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarians showed us no common [v]kindness; for they kindled a fire and received us all, because of the [w]rain that had come on, and because of the cold. Now when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a [x]viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a [y]murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. He, however, shook off the beast into the fire, and [z]suffered no harm. But *they* expected that he would have swollen or fallen down suddenly dead; but when they had been long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they [a]changed their minds and said that he was a god.

v ver. 10. *cf.* Prov. 16. 7.
w cf. Matt. 25. 35-40. *cf.* Heb. 6. 7.
x cf. Gen. 3. 1.
y cf. Lk. 13. 2. *cf.* Jno. 7. 24.
z cf. Mk. 16. 18. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12.
a cf. ch. 14. 11-19. *cf.* ch. 8. 10.

2. The incidents of Paul's stay at Melita have all one character. They show us how the favor of the islanders was won by the display of divine power acting through him in the setting aside of what was in fact the power of the enemy, but in their minds divine, and in the relief of human suffering. The chief man receives and entertains all Paul's company. The bearing of all this upon the allegorical meaning is as plain as need be. If we have indeed arrived at that period in the Church's history when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and the emperor its official head,—when in the thoughts of men it had reached the land of milk and honey, which by the application to themselves of Jewish prophecies they could believe also to be their land of promise, then there is little difficulty in what is before us now. The very acceptance of this new head changed everything, however much the old forms might be maintained, and declared to all who had heart to understand the wreck of all true church principle. It was decisive enough that the first who took this place of ecclesiastical head was a man unconverted, and (what was still more decisive according to the doctrines of the day) unbaptized; baptized at last by a denier of the deity of Christ; the slayer also of his son and of his wife. They had afterwards to invent the fiction of the bath of Constantine to cover what was ecclesiastically the sorest disgrace. Yes, the ship was wrecked, but they had reached nevertheless the land of honey, their Melita. By and by a new ship also would be found to carry them to their destination.

Yet had not in fact the serpent's power been overcome when the Pontifex Maximus, the head of heathen power, the head that had so recently and fiercely bit at Christianity, and not in vain, was now itself Christian, and putting down heathenism? According to many since, it was the fulfilment of the Apocalyptic story of the Dragon and the Woman, and the Dragon's being cast out of heaven. Was it not indeed a good that in the seat of widest earthly power the malignant forces of evil should be dispossessed by the healing and life-giving influences of heaven's sweetest grace? That is what captivates the people of Melita, who see the viper harmless and cast into the fire, and presently experience the mercy of God in the undeniable signs of divine working. Who can deny the blessings thus coming in through that wonderful change which we have been contemplating? So Paul is in the house of Publius, and the new ship is laden with things which are the thankful acknowledgment of benefits received. Yet is Paul after all a prisoner still, and the vessel's head, at much less distance than before, is pointing towards Rome!

So again we have a ship of Alexandria, and the fresh start is but a continuation of the former voyage. The vessel went under the sign of the Dioscuri, the

Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the [b] chief of the island, by name Publius, who received and entertained us three days courteously. And it was so that the father of Publius lay ill of fever and dysentery; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him and [c] healed him. And when this was done, the rest also who had diseases in the island came and were healed; who also [d] honored us with many honors; and on sailing laded us with things for our need.

And after [e] three months we set sail in a ship of [f] Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was the Dioscuri.* And landing at Syracuse, we tarried three days: and from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium; and after one day a [g] south wind having sprung up, we came on the second day to Puteoli: where we found [h] brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days; and so we came to† Rome. And thence the brethren, having heard about us, came out to [i] meet us as far as Appii Forum ‡ and the Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took [j] courage.

b *cf.* ch.13.7.
c *cf.* ch. 19. 11, etc.
d *ctr.* ch. 13. 50, 51.
e *cf.* ver. 17.
f ch. 27. 6. *cf.* Mk.8.14 -21.
g ch. 27. 13.
h ch. 21. 4. ch. 27. 3.
i *cf.* ch.20.38.
j *cf.* ch.17.15. *cf.* Rom.15. 30-33.

* Literally, "sons of Jupiter," (Castor and Pollux).
† Or, "toward." ‡ Or, "Forum of Appius."

"sons of Jupiter," Castor and Pollux, the patron divinities of sailors. Perhaps we may interpret this as showing what is certainly true, that while Jupiter himself may have passed away, the ideas born of heathenism remain to preside over the course of the state-church. The very title of Pontifex Maximus to which reference has been made, was retained by the Christian emperors for some time, and when dropped by them was revived, and at the present time is borne by the pope! It carried with it the claim of chief authority in matters of religion, and it is intended to announce this claim to-day.

At Syracuse they land and tarry for three days. Syracuse means "dragging unwillingly," and speaks sufficiently of the exercise of arbitrary power; which Rhegium, a "forcing the way through," intensifies. It is singular at least, that here the Dioscuri, who presided over the vessel's course, were again the patron-divinities. Puteoli ends the voyage, and takes its name from the thirty-three mineral "wells" that were there, or else from their ill-odor. Puteoli was the chief harbor of Rome, although some distance from the city. Here they found brethren, with whom at their solicitation Paul was able to stay seven days; "and so we came to Rome." The market place and the taverns complete the journey—morally, as in fact; though here also we have the meeting of the apostle with the Roman brethren.

In all this the tracing of historical fulfilment may be little detailed, but the general character of the period between the state-church and the church-state is sufficiently shown. Violence, breach of faith, pretentious assumption, characterize it; the mal-odorous wells (of error introduced) bring us nearly to Rome itself, though the traffic of the market and the dissipation of the tavern are needed touches to the picture. Even here Paul's heart is cheered as he looks upon the brethren; and prisoner as he is, he thanks God and takes courage. This is always the style of God's precious book: His "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," rings throughout it. The head hung down means only unbelief, and it is not in this way that Paul enters the miscalled "eternal city." All things that are seen are temporal; "things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit."

3 (xxviii. 16-31): The special People once again.

3. And when we came to Rome,* Paul was [k]permitted to abide by himself with the soldier who guarded him. And it came to pass that after [l]three days he called together those that were chief of the Jews; and when they were come together, he said unto them, Brethren, I, though I had [m]done nothing against the people or the customs of our fathers, was yet delivered a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who when they had [n]examined me desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was [o]compelled to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause, therefore, did I call for you, to see and to speak with you; for on account of the [p]hope of Israel am I bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren arriving report or speak any evil concerning thee. But we think right to hear from thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that [q]everywhere it is spoken against.

k vers.30,31.
l *cf.* Col. 3.1.
m ch. 25. 8.
n ch. 26. 30, 31.
o ch. 25. 10–12.
p ch. 26. 6,7.
q *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 16.

* Some add, "the centurion delivered up the prisoners to the prætorian prefect; but."

3. There is yet a brief closing portion, which has a sorrowful yet tender interest for us. Once more we are made to see how, spite of all that he has experienced at their hands, the heart of Paul—in this not unlike his blessed Master surely—clings still to Israel. Three days only elapse after he has reached Rome when he sends for the chief of the Jews, to explain his position to them. They have forced him to appeal to Cæsar; but he has no thought to appear before him as the accuser of his nation. Accuse them he cannot, while it is their hope of which he is partaker; and on account of that hope he is bound with that chain.

To which they reply that they have heard no evil of him; but that they *have* heard of the Christian sect as that which everywhere is spoken against. They would fain hear therefore from his lips an account of what he believes. Upon which a day is set, and they come to his lodging; and there from morning to evening he expounds, as only he among men perhaps could, the whole matter from their own scriptures, law and prophets. The result is the same as ever: "some assented to the things that were said, and some disbelieved." On the whole there is clearly rejection, and Paul has to leave them under the burden which the Spirit through Isaiah had long ago pronounced with regard to them. Alas, they would not be healed, but deliberately sealed up their eyes and ears against conviction. Yet they cannot prevent the outflow of a grace which will not be content to have no response from men to His long labor of love. Nay, if Israel values it not, there are others who need it. "Be it known to you therefore that this salvation of God is sent unto the nations; and they will hear it."

Yet his position at that moment was, as we have seen, a sad prognostication that as to the Gentiles also their reception of the divine message will allow no boast over the insensate Jew. Rome is the fatal word that epitomizes their history; and not Rome pagan, but Rome papal. We may refuse in our pride to accept such a sentence,—we with our three hundred years since for us Rome's yoke was broken. Yes, and whither are we tending now? But the true answer is, not in any prophesying of our own, but in the statement of the conditions which we are under as those who have taken place and responsibilities of Israel's broken off branches as the people of God to-day; and these conditions the

And having appointed him a day, many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, [r]testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, from both the [s]law of Moses and the prophets, from morning to evening. And [t]some assented to the things that were said, and some [u]disbelieved. And in disagreement among themselves they departed, Paul having said one word, [v]Well spake the Holy Spirit through Esaias the prophet unto our *fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For this people's [w]heart is become fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and return, and I should heal them. Be it known unto you therefore that this salvation of God hath been [z]sent unto the Gentiles; and they will hear it.†

And he abode two whole years in his own hired lodging, and received all who came unto him, [y]preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all openness [z]unhindered.

r ver. 31. *cf.* ch. 20. 21.
s *cf.* ch. 24. 14. *cf.* Lk. 24. 44.
t *cf.* ch. 13. 43.
u *cf.* ch. 17. 13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14-16.
v Is. 6. 9, 10. Matt. 13. 14, 15.
w Jno. 12. 40. *cf.* Rom. 11. 8.
x ch. 13. 46, 47.
y *cf.* ch. 20. 25. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12, 13.
z *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 9. *cf.* ch. 20. 24. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7.

*Many read, "your."

†Some add: "And when he had said this, the Jews went away, and had great reasoning among themselves."

apostle Paul himself has stated for us (Rom. xi. 18–22): "Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, *if* thou *continue* in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Now Rome with its claim to be the Catholic Church to-day, whatever abatement we may justly insist on as to this, is at least a positive proof that the Gentile body as such has *not* "continued" in the goodness of God. It is useless to talk of reformation and recovery: all that is but confession that the body has *not* continued. It is useless to plead that Rome is an apostate: apostasy is the plainest possible non-continuance. Thank God for all whom His mercy has saved from complicity with its wickedness! but the salvation of individuals, however much it may mean for *them*, is by no means the salvation of the Gentile body, which has had its trial, and is to be set aside. This is, I doubt not, why the Acts ends with Rome: it is the complete forecast of the issue in responsibility; although we have for this to look beyond the literal history which is but the foreshadow, to that which it has been overruled to express. It is thus like the epistles to the seven churches, which were, as we know, actually existent, and in the condition which the epistles depict at the time when these were written, yet were similarly overruled to give us the full-length history of the Church till Christ's coming again.

We are left with a touching yet cheering picture of the apostle's position in a hostile world in which nevertheless God acts still as He will, making the wrath of man to praise Him and restraining the remainder of it. The minister of Christ is fettered; the word of God not bound. And yet to common eyes this too might seem to be. Faith is needed everywhere, for God seeks and delights in faith; yet "of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 36).

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

THE Epistles of Paul have been already characterized as the Levitical division of the New Testament Pentateuch. They are this as bringing into the sanctuary—into the presence of God; and for this declaring the power and value of the work which opens the sanctuary and gives the soul its ability to stand before Him. So the sacrifices are in the forefront of Leviticus; the opening of the sanctuary by them on the day of atonement occupies the central portion of that book. But at that time it could be but for a moment: sacrifices and sanctuary alike were only "the figures of the true;" the dispensation was that of law, and even the high priest who alone entered the holiest, could not draw nigh; the true way in to God could not yet be made manifest. Paul was from the first, as the Acts has shown us, in the light of the opened heavens—opened really now; and the gospel of the glory of Christ was that by which he was converted, as it was that glory that drew him on, and gave him as his one purpose to win Christ and to be found in Him. For all else his desire and aim were this, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

As a minister of Christ, there were two special spheres assigned to him: he was in a distinct and peculiar sense "minister of the gospel" (Col. i. 23), not "a" minister, as the common version reads; just as he was also in a specific sense "minister of the church" (ver. 25). On the one hand, none besides of the inspired writers declares the truth of justification and the place in Christ; though John does indeed approach very near to him in both respects, and the parable of the publican intimates the former, without developing it (Luk. xviii. 13, 14). We find these as foundations in the first of Paul's epistles. As to the Church, it is only Paul who speaks of it as the Body of Christ, or develops its relationship as Bride to Him.

The Epistles group themselves in two series. They are fourteen in number; which, of course, has its significance, as everything else in regard to the word of God, and shows in the double seven what has been already said to be characteristic of his testimony: he is the *witness of the perfection of the accomplished work.* Yet this does not mean that his writings will necessarily arrange themselves in this septenary way, and in fact they do not. They really partake of the pentateuchal form which runs so through the structure of Scripture, falling into two divisions of five parts each. The first division comprises what we may designate as the *positional* epistles, treating for the most part of individual position with its consequences; while the second division treats of *associative* or *collective relationships.* There stand thus in the first

series, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians (with Philemon as a supplement), and Philippians. In the second we have, the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, Hebrews, the two to Timothy, and Titus. It may seem at first sight as if Ephesians were connected as much with the second division here as with the first, seeing that the Church occupies so large a place in it, and the truth concerning it is even in some respects more fully developed than elsewhere. Yet, while we must admit a strong link in this way with Corinthians, the difference between them is just as plain, and will illustrate that between the two divisions, just where they approach most nearly to one another. Corinthians, it is plain, speaks of the Church in its order and activities on earth; Ephesians gives it as an object of faith simply, in its heavenly character. Thus it is really an individual position with regard to it that we take in this epistle. That there is everywhere in Scripture a connection of the various truths (or parts of truth) with one another, is of course evident, and that links between these various parts may be found everywhere therefore. Scripture itself is thus, as being the living thing it is, an organism; and we cannot wholly separate any book of Scripture from the rest. It will be our constant aim to show and rate at their value these living links; while even for this very purpose the individuality of each book, and every real division that Scripture manifests, must be maintained; just as in all physiology, the organs, and the tissues also which make up the organs, must be first demonstrated, before we trace these living interdependencies at all. The application of this to Scripture is not yet finding the full and hearty recognition that it ought to have in order to the experience of its value aright.

We shall confine ourselves for the present to Paul's first pentateuch, as this will occupy us for a good while to come. The central thoughts and relations of the books must be briefly stated—quite briefly in the first place—in order that a nearer view may be a real enlargement of thought, and not an entanglement or a perplexity. And here, however foolish would be the idea of studying Scripture in the concordance, every true student of it will gladly own the help which the concordance gives to clear discernment of the central thoughts of its divisions; and most of all, perhaps, in the Epistles. We must, of course, be here as always taught by the Spirit, in order not to go astray, and must use a just discrimination as to the material which it puts into our hand. There is no way of knowledge which will enable us to escape the need of labor: labor is a condition of all fruitfulness which a wise and holy God has given us as a yoke most helpful in our fallen state, but which has also its abundant recompense in its gains along the road, and in the joy of an activity, which is as it were the very buoyancy of life itself, and maintains this.

1. A mere glance at a concordance will assure us how large a place in Romans the thought of *righteousness* has. Conspicuously absent from the practical and preceptive fourth division, in the rest of the epistle it

is occurring constantly; while justification, the declaration of righteousness as against accusation made, has proportionately almost as large a place.* Thus the foundation character of the epistle is fully manifest; and the foundation is, one may say, of squared stones. These words occur in various applications but in the same interest, that of the salvation of the sinner who believes in Jesus. Thus we have man's lack (and hopeless lack) of righteousness fully proved against him; but with this the righteousness of God in justifying; that righteousness is imputed without works; that it is a righteousness of faith; a justification by the blood of Christ; and how righteousness of life is secured by it. Romans is thus a full and exact gospel treatise; but it goes further than many Christians are able to follow it, even to a place in Christ attached to a new life in Him, of whom Adam was but the contrastive type. These two things then, righteousness and a place in Christ, may be said to be the twofold theme of the first epistle. The righteousness of God in the present rejection of Israel as a nation (chaps. ix.–xi) is an argument appended very naturally to the main topics; though here also righteousness is the keynote still, and of course in harmony with the numerical place of the epistle.

2. Galatians is in closest connection with Romans, being a buttress to its doctrine of justification by faith; but essentially, in accordance with the second place in which it stands, it is a controversy. Judaism and Christianity, law and grace, are shown to be in absolute opposition, now that faith is openly avowed to be God's principle, the schoolmaster's reign over, and the children of God at home with God, having received the Spirit of adoption. The "cross," "crucified,"† "curse of the law," are characteristic words: the law as a principle lay in the way of blessing, and to be a Saviour Christ must take its curse, to remove it from us. Thus alone could the spirit of bondage be removed, and the liberty attained with which Christ has made us free. But also this deliverance is from the world, as well as law: the cross is the stamp of the world's enmity to Christ; and we, as crucified with Him, are crucified to the world. Nothing counts for God now but that new creation, to which as in Christ we belong.

3. Ephesians is characteristically the epistle of the heavenly places. In it the sanctuary is opened, not merely to let out the light of the glory, wonderful as the blessing of that is, but a risen and glorified Man has entered and sat down there, and He the Representative of men His people. We therefore are quickened together with Him, risen, and seated in Him in the heavenlies where He sits. That is the height of Christian position: no higher can be imagined.

* "Righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) occurs thirty-six times; nearest to it comes second Corinthians, seven times. "Righteous" (δικαιος) seven times; which is only exceeded by Matthew and Luke of the Gospels, while in the Epistles first John comes next with five occurrences. "Justify," "justification," occur eighteen times; Galatians coming next with eight.

† "Our old man was crucified with Him" is found once in Rom. vi. 6.

But there is more that follows, nevertheless; for by the indwelling of the Spirit, the fruit of redemption, we are joined to Him as members of a Body of which He is Head, the Church being thus His Fulness (or complement), who Himself filleth all in all. This is a mystery, long hidden, now told out; besides which the Church is shown to be the Eve also of the Last Adam, the fulfilment of the earliest type of these relationships, with which at the very earliest moment for expression of it the divine heart overflows! Again the Church as indwelt of the Spirit is the habitation of God, and growing unto an holy temple in the Lord; to God is glory in the Church by Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of ages! In every truth here, Ephesians without doubt fills its numerical place; and what an unrolling of glories it is! Must not the mere naming them fill our hearts with adoration?

4. Colossians doctrinally follows Ephesians. Some would have it precede it; but its connection with it, which cannot be doubted, is really on the other side. It has the character of its fourth place, and speaks of the walk on earth in the power of the truths that have been already unfolded. For this reason it is that on the one hand the sitting in heavenly places is not mentioned, and on the other we have the links with Romans and Galatians which have been urged in behalf of its intermediate position. The heavens are where the hope is laid up; while we are cut loose from earth in order that we may be unhindered in our course thither. This position of the Colossian epistle may account also for what at least would seem unaccountable in the intermediate one, that the Spirit of God is only once mentioned. In the first three epistles it is quite otherwise; and here also we must probably take into account the objective character of the epistle to explain the omission. It is not the power working in us that is in question, which has been already sufficiently attested, but the objective truths that rule the heart and possess it. It is the furnishing for the way that is before us here—the first part of Numbers, and not the experience of the way in the latter part. And here a beautiful character of the epistle comes out, that it is Christ and His fulness that is the furnishing. Thus the central text is surely here (chap. ii. 9, 10), "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in Him we are filled up." We see this variously applied and amplified throughout the epistle.

A singular-looking supplement to Colossians is found in Philemon; but even the historical connection is very close. "Onesimus is mentioned in Colossians, and was sent back at the very time of that letter, Philemon himself also belonging to Colosse. It is strange, in fact, that it should be separated from that epistle, except from its being written to an individual, not an assembly, as in the latter case.

"The subject, too, no doubt seems different. It is nevertheless most beautifully connected as an appendix, as we shall easily see. For it is striking that addresses to masters and servants are found (along with other relations in life,) in both Ephesians and Colossians; *to masters*, in

Paul's epistles, *nowhere else;* thus this address to a master fittingly follows.

"A reason, too, for these addresses in these two epistles is surely this, that the thought of the place in Christ, and of the new life of which they speak, should not be taken enthusiastically to do away with the relationships of the present: a real danger, as it has proved, for some.

"Now Philemon demonstrates practically how for the apostle these relationships remain. Onesimus is by his conversion 'much more than a servant, a brother beloved;' yet Paul sends him back to his master, though he would gladly have retained him, but without *his* mind he would do nothing. The epistle shows thus strikingly the true exalting power of Christianity, not intended to release from the duties or disadvantages of an earthly place,—*not* to be a lever to lift into earthly position or ease,—but to fill with a competency to serve in the lowest and lowliest, like Him whom we all serve." (Numerical Structure of Scripture.) Philemon thus clearly connects with the subject of Colossians, the earthly path of the heavenly people.

5. Finally in this series, Philippians takes its place as a grand and blessed Deuteronomic review of conditions and results. The way and the end are put together in a glorious fashion, as found in the experience of the apostle himself; none surely more competent to give them to us! It is that experience side of things which we have noticed as absent in Colossians, but which is now developed in a practical summing up of all that is gone before it. The lesson of Romans is shown as learned in the ability to go on in freedom from the law of sin, the flesh being dismissed as having no confidence in it. It tells of the Cross as for Christ the end of a path of humiliation, which leads out of the world, and into the highest place with God; in all which we are exhorted, as having His mind, to follow Him: which is the lesson of Galatians. It speaks also of Christ as in the place He has reached, a heavenly Object for the heart, as in Ephesians and (especially) Colossians. Then in conclusion it tells us of the practical result for one who has fully tested it,—of the competency of Christ so known and lived for, amid all exercises and all circumstances whatever: "I know both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need: I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." That is not a theoretic conclusion, but a conscious experience.

In their relation to one another it is plain that these epistles are a progressive series, with the pentateuchal seal fully upon them. They give us position and the outcome of position known and enjoyed. There is no need to enter more at present into this, which in its details can only properly be realized as we take up the books in succession.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF ROMANS

ROMANS has more plainly the regularity of a specific treatise than perhaps any other epistle. Everything advanced in it is reasoned out and vindicated from the objections that could be brought against it; for the more precious and fundamental the truth the more will the unbelief and pride of men summon all the forces of their intellect to overthrow it; the god of this world blinding the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine into them. The theme of Romans is pure gospel; to make way for which, the apostle calls creation and law (man's own conscience also bearing witness) in evidence that both Jew and Gentile are alike under sin and unable to stand in the judgment. He then shows that the righteousness of God, the very thing of which the convicted sinner is afraid, is on the contrary, as manifested in the sacrificial work of Christ, now the refuge and shelter open to men as sinners, and the shield over all who believe in Jesus. It is faith then by which we are justified, not law, though this confirms the law: which witnesses to it in Abraham the father of the legal people of God, and in circumcision the seal of the righteousness of faith in him, and the token of the covenant made with him. Another thing: God showed Himself in him as the God of resurrection, the fulfilment of the promise depending upon that. We, too, believe in the God of resurrection, upon which all for us depends: He having raised up Jesus, delivered to death for our offences, and whose resurrection therefore is our justification. Peace with God, an unchangeable standing in grace, and the glory of God as our hope, are the fruits of this, able to turn to blessing all the trials of the way, our hope secure in the love of God revealed to us in Christ when enemies, and who has reconciled us to Himself through Him. Thus God Himself becomes our Joy.

The power of the blood of Christ for the sinner is thus shown in the first part; in the next we have the place in Christ risen which is the portion of the saint, and the blessings which in this way are made his. We are carried back here to the first Adam and the consequences of his fall, in corruption of nature, with death and impending judgment, for his posterity; law coming in, not as deliverer, but to reckon up sin and turn it into open transgression. On the other hand, Christ upon the same principle of the one involving the many, has become a new Head for deliverance, of whom Adam was but the type in contrast, and in whom we have blessing greater than was lost,—a new life to which

justification is attached, as condemnation to the former one; grace reigning now where before sin reigned. Thus before God we are in Christ, and not in Adam, the death of Christ having been for us the crucifixion of the old man, so that the body of sin might be annulled, that we might serve sin no more. Dead with Christ to sin, in His death to it once for all, we are alive in Him to God for evermore. This is position, not experience; but the result is, if faith has accepted this, that we cannot live in sin. But still the question of power has to be met; and this involves another—that of law. By the death of Christ we have died to law as well as to sin, and that we should bring forth fruit to God. Experience under the test of law shows that what forbids lust as sin yet provokes it, revives sin and is death to me, discovering in me a law of sin to which I am captive. God's deliverance is by the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus, which fulfills in us the righteousness of the law, impossible to the law itself. Thus a walk in the Spirit becomes possible, though the body is still dead because of sin. Led by the Spirit, we mortify its deeds and expect its redemption, already consciously children of God, and awaiting the manifestation of His sons, for which the whole creation, groaning, waits. But our hope is sure, and we wait in patience: if God be for us, who can be against us?

This closes the doctrine as to position. There follows the question of the promises to Israel, and how they are affected. Paul argues that they have always been fulfilled according to the sovereign pleasure of God, to Isaac and not Ishmael, to Jacob and not Esau. Will they complain? In the wilderness they would all have been cut off but for this principle; and sovereign mercy is man's only hope. Israel have stumbled at the stumbling-stone, and rejected the way of righteousness by faith for the impracticable righteousness of law. Israel's failure had been announced by their own prophets, though they have not been altogether set aside. An election of grace always remains, and God has overruled their fall for blessing to the Gentiles. But let the Gentiles also take heed: if they continue not in His goodness, they too will be set aside, and Israel brought in; and this will be again for wider blessing still to the whole world.

Practical exhortations close the epistle.

The divisions then are these four:—

1. (Chaps. i.–v. 11):—Righteousness of God in Christ towards all.
2. (Chaps. v. 12–viii.):—Deliverance from sin and law, as dead with Christ and in relationship with the Deliverer.
3. (Chaps. ix.–xi.):—Israel's special promises and their fulfillment.
4. (Chaps. xii.–xvi.): The ways that suit the mercies shown us.

THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–v. 11.)

Righteousness of God in Christ towards all, and over all believers.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–17.)

This the power of God to salvation in a gospel all of Him.

1 (1-7): Promised before, now given in Christ.

1. [a] PAUL, [b] bondman of Jesus Christ, a [c] called apostle [d] set apart to [the] gospel of God, which he [e] promised before through his prophets in holy scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus* Christ our Lord, come of the [f] seed of David according to the flesh, marked out [as] [g] Son of God in power, according to

* The order in the original puts this clause at the end of the sentence, after the word "dead."

a *cf.* Acts 7. 58.
b *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12.
c 1 Cor. 1. 1. *cf.* Gal. 1. 15, 16.
d *cf.* Acts 9. 15. *cf.* Acts 13. 2.
e *cf.* ch. 3. 21 with Acts 17. 2, 3.
f *cf.* Matt. 1. 1. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 8.
g *cf.* Acts 9. 20. *cf.* Heb. 1. 2.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE righteousness of God in Christ is the theme of the first division of Romans; the forensic character of the epistle suiting as well the people addressed as it does the subject. Rome means "strength," or "force;" and to the many sufferers under its sway, it might seem to represent brute force only; but it never could have attained the supremacy in which it stood so long, had not that force been a disciplined, law-governed one: to law it must needs submit as first condition of any great success. Roman law accordingly still stands for us as almost the ideal of law; and this means necessarily the ideal of right also,—at least in certain respects: for though the blunders (or worse) of legislators may make us sometimes have to put in contrast law and equity, yet if the two were not in the main one, the purpose of law could not be accomplished. Error and evil are but revolutionary forces—divisive and unstable: no will of man can make them other. Because the world is under moral government, homage must be paid to it by some sort of submission; and thus it can be said of any of the powers of the world, "he is the minister of God to thee for good." Corrupt and evil as any governor on earth may be, he knows that he must pay a certain tax in this way to the right; and those most without law are, as judged in the court of their own conscience, a "law unto themselves."

According to a consent which may be held for universal therefore, in God is the fount of righteousness; and if in their highest deities the heathen world did not find a satisfying expression of this, they had to invent other, special gods to fill the gap. Thus Paul preaches to the conscience of the mass when he proclaims the righteousness of God. But when, under a conviction wrought by the Spirit, the general persuasion of man's sinfulness becomes an agonizing realization of personal guilt, then with the apprehension of this character in Him there comes a need for the preaching of the righteousness of God for comfort and not for alarm: the Righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel!

Here is the key to the meaning of a term about which there has been so much perplexity, and so great a variety of thoughts. God Himself is limited in a certain way, as we all realize. He cannot lie; He cannot repent. This is no

the [h]Spirit of holiness by [i]resurrection of [the] dead; through whom we have received [j]grace and apostleship for [k]obedience of faith among all the [l]nations for his Name's sake: among whom are ye also, [m]called of Jesus Christ:—to all that are in Rome, [n]beloved of God, called [o]saints, [p]grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[h] *cf.* Lk. 1. 35. *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. [i] *cf.* Eph. 1. 19, 20. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20, 21. *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44. [j] *cf.* Eph. 3. 2, 8; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. [k] ch. 16. 26; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. [l] *cf.* ch. 11. 13; *cf.* ch. 15. 9 21. [m] 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* ch. 8. 30. [n] *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14; *cf.* ch. 8. 39. [o] 1 Cor. 1. 2; *cf.* Heb. 13. 12. [p] 2 Cor. 1. 2, etc.

limit indeed, save that of His own perfections: He cannot act in contradiction to His attributes. Thus, though He be Love itself, yet love cannot with Him, even in the least degree, overbalance justice. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Pro. xvii. 15). So His own Word declares, and how can He then clear the guilty? Did He not, when He gave the law, say distinctly that He could not? (Ex. xxxiv. 7.)

Thus the righteousness of God is what is of first moment in the gospel; and we can see that it is His *attribute* of righteousness that is in question: "that He may be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," as the apostle shows us (chap. iii. 26), states the difficulty which the first part of the epistle meets triumphantly. That the gospel can set the very righteousness of God itself upon our side, and make it the peaceful assurance of the anxious soul, is a marvel of divine love and wisdom.

Subd. 1.

At the outset therefore the apostle sets forth this as the very power for salvation: a gospel which is entirely of God, as it is Christ who is the substance of it. Only one Man is competent to be our Saviour, who in His own Person has united God and man. We, to whom it is the gospel, have but to hear, to bow to God's wondrous grace, and be made glad; for the gospel is "glad tidings."

1. To this gospel Paul had been set apart, an apostle of it by the call of Him to whom he thankfully owns himself a bondman. For the grace that had set him free had made him His for ever. The peculiarity of his call we have seen elsewhere; he does not now speak of it, nor of where he had seen His glory of whom he speaks. He carries us back, rather, to His revelation of Himself on earth; for his purpose is to show how in His own Person He to whom the ages had been looking forward had bridged over the distance which the fall had brought in between God and man. Not that this alone could have removed the distance for man. It made God's purpose apparent to do so, and showed the strength of the hands to which this purpose was entrusted.

The promise had been in the mercy of God given from the beginning. The broken echoes of it are heard far and wide among the traditions of the nations: broken indeed, for man cannot be trusted to keep what is of most vital importance to him without corruption. Thus the prophets—themselves as the special men of God in their days the witness of general departure—had preserved it in scriptures which bore in their character as "holy" scriptures the evidence of their origin from the Holy One; and the "prophets" vindicate their title by the fact that they "speak forth" what is a message from God.

How great the mercy of a written Word, and how plainly has this been always in the mind of the All-wise for men! None the less surely that, to keep it for them, God had to separate to Himself a people from the idolatrous mass, and make them the depositaries of it. There it was as the voice of divine Wisdom in the highways of the nations, available for those who sought at least, little as men might seek or care.

Now the One so heralded had come, of the seed of David according to the flesh,—His line marked out more precisely as the years went on, the stream of prophecy becoming wider and fuller as the years lengthened, and deferred hope

2 (8. 17): Which he desired to preach to them for the confirmation of their faith; being through faith for salvation, according even to Old Testament Scriptures.

2. First, I [q]thank my God through Jesus Christ concerning you all, that your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how [r]unceasingly I make mention of you at my prayers, always beseeching if any way now at least I may be prospered,

[q] 1 Cor. 1. 4. Phil. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 8-10.
[r] *cf.* Eph. 1. 15, 16. *cf.* Col. 1. 9. *cf.* Phile. 4.

might make the heart grow sick. Of royal seed, Himself a King,—such a "Ruler over men" as David's own last words foretold; yet that was His lesser and lower glory: that was "according to the *flesh*," and the word is used which intimates all the weakness of humanity in its lowest part; not that which declared man's place in creation as the offspring of God, but which linked him with all the life of which he was the head. And this, just as such, has for us how much blessing: it is the end of the Bethel ladder let down to earth; and bringing with it blessing and lifting up for the whole system with which man is connected! With flesh comes what love covets and could not find in any sphere above it: by that will which He came to do, "we are sanctified, through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ." (Heb. x. 10.)

But He is also Son of God in a way that Adam unfallen could not have claimed to be. Amid all the lowliness of a real humanity such as flesh would argue, He is marked out as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. "A Spirit of holiness" (there is no article to "Spirit") is taken by many as the Lord's divine nature, which, they urge, is the proper antithesis here: "according to the flesh," "according to the spirit;" but there is no similar language used elsewhere in Scripture for the divine nature of our Lord, and the passages appealed to (2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18) do not apply. If exact definition were intended, "a spirit of holiness" would not even really distinguish a nature truly divine, which the title "Son of God," in contrast with "come of David according to the flesh," sufficiently indicates. Paul from the beginning of his ministry, and in distinction from the first apostolic preaching given us in the Acts, "preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20).

Here we shall find what the apostle refers to, if we remember how at Jordan after His baptism, the Spirit came upon our Lord as the Father's voice proclaimed Him His beloved Son, to anoint Him for the work to which His baptism in the river of death has pledged Him. The Baptist saw it, as he tells us, and bore twofold testimony that He was both the Lamb of sacrifice and the Son of God (John i. 29–34). From this His ministry among men publicly begins, with works of power which show Him master of death itself, into which He went but to dispel it. Thus He raises the dead: Lazarus comes forth at His call, in attestation that He is the Son of the Father, whom the Father always hears (John xi. 4, 41–43). And this power to raise the dead, exercised in this way, is power over the sin which has brought in death, and which by and by His own resurrection fully manifests. He has taken our sins upon Him, and rises free from all the burdens He has assumed; the glory in His Face that which is now gospel for us all, and which characterizes in a special way Paul's gospel.

This then is He of whom the gospel speaks; a message which for its importance must have messengers devoted to it to make it known in all the world, and press it upon the attention of the most unwilling. Under the law there had been nothing of this kind outside of Israel; inside only exceptional prophetic voices, the call of solitary watchers in the night, for long silent, till renewed by the voice crying in the wilderness. But now it is a message of the morning passing on from lip to lip, where one who wakens, wakens up his fellow to repeat it. To start such music Paul "received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations for His Name's sake;"—obedience not legal, but springing out of faith: for faith is the great worker, and if it

by the will of God to [s]come to you. For I long to see you, that I may [t]impart to you some spiritual gift, for your establishment; that is, to be [u]mutually comforted among you by the faith that is in each other, both yours and mine. And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I often [v]purposed coming to you, and have been hindered to the present time; that I might

[s] *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 17, 18. *cf.* ch. 15. 23, 24.
[t] *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 8. *cf.* Col. 2. 1–3.
[u] *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17.
[v] *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 7, 8; *cf.* Phile. 20. *cf.* Acts 19. 21.

have not works, is dead, not living faith. This faith the grace of the gospel awakens in the soul which God opens to it; he who had received grace in its most perfect expression was the suited apostle of it, and that in its widest range of blessed ministry. All nations were now to be the recipients of God's salvation; among whom already were these at Rome—saints by the call of grace. Everywhere we see in the very forefront of the epistle—in this opening salutation, the stamp of divine sovereignty, which is nothing else than divine love that will not be restrained by all the obduracy of man's heart. This call is the voice of the Creator: "I call unto them, they stand up together" (Isa. xlviii. 13); but now bringing forth a new creation, which with gladness proportioned to the pains He has taken to produce it, He claims and declares His own. Those called are therefore saints by calling—a people sanctified to Himself. This is the fundamental meaning of "saint," which therefore all His people are, set apart to Himself. This the blood of Christ has made us as redeemed to Him; this the work of the Spirit makes effective holiness. Let us notice the "beloved of God," which precedes and accounts for this: God has set His heart upon us; therefore He will have us for Himself. To these at Rome therefore the apostle sends his salutation of grace and peace:—not a mere wish, nor even a prayer, but a comforting assurance of blessing from God revealed as Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Father's throne.

2. He hastens to let them know, writing to them of the gospel as he is, that he means no possible discredit of their faith. On the contrary, he thanks God through Jesus Christ, who had drawn them to Himself, that their faith was being everywhere spoken about. Such a report, contrary to the custom, perhaps, with most of us, seems always to have engaged the apostle's prayers in an especial manner for those of whom he heard it. Accordingly, as one serving God in his spirit in the gospel of His Son, he was continually making mention of these Roman disciples when he was in prayer, not merely that they might be blessed, but as himself desiring to come to them. Indeed it was the longing of his heart to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, for their establishment. He speaks in the consciousness of that with which God had endowed him, and as realizing that the sincerest faith was never beyond the need of help. And indeed he rejoiced in and would be comforted by their faith as they by his.

Besides, there was a special link between all Gentiles and himself as the apostle of the Gentiles. He would not neglect any part of the field which, as that, was committed to his care; and had purposed often to come to them that he might have fruit among them as well as elsewhere. We see that the assembly at Rome was essentially a Gentile assembly, and thus was reckoned to belong to his sphere of labor. Rome herself, long after this, and to the present time, claims the apostle of the circumcision as its own, making nothing of Paul's assertion here. It is characteristic of those who "say they are Jews, and are not" (Rev. ii. 9), and natural for those who after the Jewish manner cling to succession from apostles, which Paul's call and mission so decisively broke through. Had it been Peter who had written to the Romans, how this would have been urged! The incontrovertible fact that Peter left the Gentile field to Paul (Gal. ii. 9) goes for nothing with them.

As for Paul, it is as a responsibility that he recognizes the place in which he has been put, an obligation to all classes to declare to them the gospel. Before

have some [w]fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the nations. Both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and unintelligent, am I [z]debtor: so, as far as may depend on me, I am [y]ready to preach the gospel also to you that are in Rome. For I am not [z]ashamed of the gospel:* for it is the [a]power of God unto salvation to every one that [b]believeth, to the [c]Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is [d]righteousness of God revealed, [e]by faith, [f]to faith: according as it is [g]written, Now the just shall live by faith.

* "Of Christ" is omitted now by all editors.

[w] *cf.* Phil. 1. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 1, 2.
[x] *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *cf.* Col. 1. 29.
[y] *cf.* ch. 15. 22. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.
[z] *cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17.
[a] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 18, 24; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 5. [b] ch. 4. 5; *cf.* Acts 16. 31. [c] ch. 2. 9; *cf.* Lk. 24. 47. [d] ch. 3. 21. [e] ch. 3. 22, 25, 30; ch. 5. 1. [f] *cf.* Mk. 9. 23. *cf.* ch. 10. 16, 17. [g] Hab. 2. 4; Gal. 3. 11; Heb. 10. 38.

God there were in fact but two classes, the believer and the unbeliever. The Jew had the offer first, but if salvation be by faith in it, the believing Gentile was on as sure ground, and in blessing as full as ever the Jew could be.

But he comes here to what is now the great theme before him. He was not ashamed of the gospel: he had no reason to be of that which was the power of God to salvation for men. (What a contrast of the "power" for which the very name of Rome stood, and with which as mistress of the world it was identified!) Faith, which the grace of God invited on the part of all, was the common principle of blessing for all. But what made the gospel to be so divine a power? The revelation of the righteousness of God in it. He does not say, the love or the mercy of God, but His righteousness: because, as we have seen, without permission of righteousness love and mercy cannot act; every act of God must be justified by all His attributes. No sinner was ever afraid of the love of God, or of His mercy; His righteousness is another thing. Consequently it is just the righteousness of God which, if it can be revealed in *gospel*—in good news to sinners—then we have what indeed has power to save.

But what then is this good news? a gospel of works? there can be none; and that for a very simple reason. "All have sinned;" and "if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." But, if then, we could henceforth yield Him unsinning obedience, that is due to Him already, and cannot atone for the sins of the past. Yet who could promise this even for the future? who would dare? Men would compromise with doing their best; but here again they do not mean just what they say. Who ever did his best? Who would dare to meet God on this ground that he had done his very best, even for a week? It would be folly indeed to think of doing so. But shall we offer Him less than this? How much less, then? That would necessarily mean the trusting to mercy without knowing how far mercy could be shown; and in no sense would righteousness be revealed in it at all.

Man cannot furnish, then, for God what would be righteousness before Him; good news there cannot be for man upon that principle; good news there cannot be, founded upon man's doing. God has another, and a very different one; the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, not the righteousness of man in anywise, save the Second Man; and the gospel being all about Christ, we need not doubt, even if we knew no more, that it is consistent with righteousness. What is left for man to do is to justify God in all this by bowing to receive His grace as grace. Faith is thus the principle upon which His grace can be shown, or (what is the same thing) His righteousness be revealed in good news to sinners. "By faith, to faith," is here the manner of the revelation. The good news is all about Christ, as the apostle has declared; faith is that in which the soul turns away from self to Christ, and the revelation being made to faith, the believer has full title to that which is revealed. Here the Old Testament adds its confirmation also to the New: if according to the law, "the man that doeth (the commandments) shall live in them," the prophet announces the contrary

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. i. 18–iii. 20.)

Creation and Law witnessing against Gentile and Jew.

SECTION 1. (Chaps. i. 18–ii. 16.)

The Gentile, left to himself, in lawless independence.

1 (i. 18-32): With the knowledge of God, not choosing to retain it.
1 (18-20): Sufficiency of the knowledge.

1. [1] FOR [the] [h]wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all [i]impiety and [j]unrighteousness of men who hold* the [k]truth in unrighteousness. Because what may be known of God is [l]manifest among them;

h ch. 2. 8, 9. 1 Thess. 1. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
i ch. 3. 18.
j ch. 3. 10.
k *cf.* ver. 32. *ctr.* Eph. 4. 15.
l *cf.* Acts 14. 17. *cf.* Acts 17. 24.

* R. V. renders this "hold down," but the general thought is of "possessing" or "holding fast," while the other is not incorrect. We have the same word in 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7, where the thought is evidently "hindering."

principle as in fact the way of blessing, "The just shall live by faith." (Hab. ii, 4.) Thus there is nowhere any real contradiction in God's ways with men, any more than between the plowing and the sowing. The plow of law had to do its very different work before the sowing of the gospel seed could be. That the plowing should give way to the sowing does not make light of the plowman's work. If the seed be once sown, the work of the plow will be merely devastation.

SUBD. 2.

We have now reached the body of the epistle, which proceeds in orderly progress to the full exposition of what has just been announced. If the righteousness of God is what the gospel reveals, and this on the principle of faith, then it has first to be shown, in the fullest and most careful way, that on man's part nothing else could at all avail for him. God had been working this out in the long ages preceding Christianity; and His slow, patient manner of work shows the importance of the question, as it shows also how obstinately man cleaves to some righteousness of his own, and how hard it is to bring him to repentance. Nay, the greatest pretension to righteousness that could be made was there where God had labored most. The Pharisee has become for us the very symbol of it. Everything that God had done for Israel, from the taking up of Abraham himself, in whom God's principle of faith was fully announced, when as yet there was no law to burden it with conditions, the Pharisee turned to his own account as based upon human merit; while the law, interpreted as applying merely to external conduct, could be made to serve an opposite purpose from that for which it was given. But in the law itself was the remedy for all this, as the apostle shows.

His argument covers the whole ground, bringing Gentile and Jew, with revelation and without, alike as hopeless, save in God's mere grace. His judgment, while taking account of all differences, will yet leave all without excuse; the Jew, most favored, guiltiest of all, and with an accuser just in that in which he most confidently trusts.

Sec. 1.

The case of the Gentile is that which Paul first reviews. The witness of creation to the glory of God is sufficient to condemn him for the gross idolatry to which he has turned from the actual knowledge of the true God, with which he started. The story of heathenism is that of men who with their back to the light walk necessarily in their own shadow. The moral obliquity which manifests itself in their ways is but the sure result of this departure. The fine pictures which men could draw of virtue were competent enough to show only the wilfulness of the evil which disgraced their lives, and for which their own conscience threatened them with judgment to come,—a judgment which the gospel did not ignore, but declared plainly; where the Jew would be first, as he was in privilege, but all would receive the exact award of righteousness.

1. The apostle does not overlook the difference as to light therefore; his argu-

for God hath manifested it to them; for the invisible things of him from the [m]creation of the world are perceived, being understood by the things made, [even] his everlasting [n]power and divinity, so as to make them [o]inexcusable.

m cf. Ps. 19. 1-6.
n cf. Job chs. 38-41.
o cf. ch. 2. 14, 15.

ment is, that the light man has he is not true to. The knowledge of the heathen is ample to test which way his heart inclines. He is not judged by the darkness which he cannot help, but by the light which he refuses. How can he plead his lack of that from which he turns wherever he finds it? Man's course has not been, as he would vainly have it, the evolution of a creature whom God has burdened with difficulties, yet who struggles upward under the burden, but of one whose struggles are with the God who made him, and against the Hand that would even now relieve him of a burden self-imposed.

[1] Thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all impiety and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. If one can find a person then who has no truth to hold, he cannot come under this wrath revealed. "Impiety" is the characteristic of that for which men are condemned: a heart away from God, and which on that account deals perversely with whatever truth it has. That is the indictment; and it is broad enough to cover the whole race of fallen man. There are not two classes in this statement, as some have thought: for the express argument of the apostle here is that Gentiles who have not revelation have truth sufficient to make them without excuse. Wrath is thus upon all; though love may seek and act at the same time: "we," says the apostle, speaking of himself and believers in general, "were . . . children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). Thus he immediately goes on now to say of the Gentiles outside of revelation that they have nevertheless a constant manifestation of God before their eyes. Thus they "hold the truth in unrighteousness; *because* what may be known of God is manifest among them: for God has manifested it unto them." And he proceeds at once to speak of creation. It is a testimony that we think too little about, even as Christians, and naturally do not credit it with much power of appeal to heathen minds. The very glory of the Christian revelation makes all else seem dull indeed. We argue back also from the condition of the heathen into which, whatever the testimony of nature, they yet lapsed, to depreciate that which could not keep them from lapsing. But this, forcible as it may appear, is no real argument. It is exactly the same as that which the heathen might and do urge against Christianity itself from the condition of numbers under the light of it. In this way what bears witness of the evil in man is made to discredit the wisdom and goodness of God. The apostle would say, "Let God be true and every man a liar." Surely that is the proper view, which nature itself confirms: the clouds are from the earth which conceal the brightness of the heavens. Allow that there is sin in man which could make him reject and crucify the Son of God Himself, you cannot accept an argument which would equally deny the glory of God in Him because men "saw no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him."

Yet "the heavens display the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." So said the psalmist; and the apostle is not a whit behind him here: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are perceived, being understood by the things made, even His everlasting power and divinity, so as to make them inexcusable."

And indeed there are testimonies enough of what the natural effect of these things is upon men brought face to face with them, before yet they have hardened themselves by long opposition. In the infancy of the nations, though we cannot reach back by tradition to their true beginnings, we know enough to know (what the infidel man of science often enough reminds us of) that the tendency was rather to see God in everything than to see Him nowhere. Even idolatrous Greece peopled the fountain and stream, the mountain and forest,

2 (21-23): Estrangement of heart leading to idolatry.

3 (24-25): The moral transformation wrought.

4 (26-32): Ways of apostate men.

2 Because having *p* known God they *q* glorified him not as God, neither were *r* thankful, but became vain in their *s* reasonings, and their senseless heart was *t* darkened. Professing to be *u* wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the *v* incorruptible God into the *w* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and quadrupeds and reptiles.

3 Wherefore God *z* gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, so that their bodies were dishonored among them; being such as *y* changed the truth of God into falsehood, and honored and served the *z* creature more than him who created it, who is *a* blessed throughout the ages. Amen.

4 For this reason God gave them up to *b* disgraceful passions: for both their females changed the natural use into that contrary to nature; and in like manner the males also, leaving the natural use of the female,

p cf. Job 21. 14.
q ctr. Rev. 4. 11.
r ctr. Ps. 95. 2.
s cf. 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21.
t cf. Eph. 4. 17, 18.
u cf. Acts 7. 22 with Is. 19. 11, 12.
v cf. 1 Tim. 1. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 15, 16.
w cf. Ex. 20. 4-6. *cf.* Ps. 115. 4-7. *cf.* Is. 40. 18-22. *cf.* Jer. 10. 14, 15. *cf.* Acts 17. 29.

x vers. 26, 28; *cf.* Eph. 4. 19; *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 2. *y cf.* Jer. 10. 14; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12; *cf.* Rev. 22. 15. *z cf.* Is. 40. 25, 26; *cf.* Hab. 1. 11-16. *a* ch. 9. 5. *b cf.* Gen. 19. 4; *cf.* Jude 7; *cf.* Lev. 20. 13; *cf.* Eph. 5. 12; *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

with its multitudinous gods; and the common nature worship which so infected the nations testifies at once to the power of nature to preach of the divine, and the perversion by men of that which they could not ignore.

The apostle's words by no means intimate that this witness of nature could ever do the work of the gospel: that is not the point. Nature does indeed bear witness to the gospel; but in that parabolic form for which is needed an interpreter outside itself. And the traditions of the nations show, spite of all their corruptions, that God had not left them without the knowledge of Himself, which might have in the main interpreted nature to them, if they had cared to go on with the Divine Teacher; but they cared not. The knowledge of the everlasting power and divinity of their Creator should have made them at least turn to Him; but they turned away.

2 And thus the idolatry which had overspread the nations was explained, and could only be explained, by this insane desire to forget God; which hid Him in His works, instead of discovering Him in them. Rejecting the true God, they pictured one according to their tastes, likening Him to corruptible man himself, and even to the animals below man. In which their folly, they yet imagined themselves wise; all their reasonings being made vain by a senseless and unthankful heart. They had an "occult" wisdom, as men style it now, upon which they prided themselves, and which was confessedly a groping in the dark, ignoring the plainest facts. Such is heathenism: a worship of bestial and degraded forms, the imaginations and manufacture of their worshipers. Reason and conscience unite in the condemnation of that which nevertheless under the light of Christianity is ever coming in afresh in winking Madonnas and the virtue of dead men's bones, and wafer-gods, transformed by a few magical words into soul, body, and divinity of Him whom they call their Saviour!

3 In this dishonor done to God they must necessarily degrade themselves also. The worshipers must become assimilated to what they worship. As their lusts had turned them away from the Holy One, so their new gods were made to sanction the lusts which had created them, and to which He whom they had forsaken gave them up. Man without God, whom it is his distinctive glory to recognize, becomes as the beast which has none. But the beast is therefore not a moral creature; man degraded to the beast becomes *im*moral. It is a necessary, but righteous retribution, in which man inflicts the punishment upon himself. His service of the creature is but his own gratification; which is but of the lusts which war against the soul. He feeds but the serpent-brood, which sting and

were inflamed in their lust towards one another; males with males working indecency, and receiving in themselves the recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not think fit to have God in recognition, God gave them up to a [c]reprobate mind, to do things unmeet, being filled with all [d]unrighteousness, [e]wickedness, [f]covetousness, [g]malice; full of [h]envy, [i]murder, [j]strife, [k]deceit, [l]malignity; [m]whisperers, [n]backbiters, [o]hateful to God, [p]insolent, [q]proud, [r]boasters, [s]inventors of evil things, [t]disobedient to parents, [u]without understanding, [v]covenant-breakers, without [w]natural affection, [x]merciless; men who, [y]knowing the righteous judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only practise them, but also have sympathetic [z]pleasure with those who do them.

2 (ii. 1-16.): Against the mere judges of others acts and conscience will testify in the day of judgment.

1 (1-11): No barren knowledge required, but consistent righteousness, of all alike.

2. [1] Wherefore thou art [a]inexcusable, O man, every one

c vers.24,26. *cf.*1 Tim.4. 2.
d ch. 3. 10.
e *cf.* Gen.13. 13.
f *cf.* 1 Ki.21. 1, etc.
g *cf.* Gen.27. 41.
h *cf.* Matt. 27. 18.
i *cf.* 1 Jno.3. 12-15.
j *cf.*Prov.17. 19.
k *cf.* Josh.9. 3-5.
l *cf.*Acts 17. 5.
m *cf.* Ps. 41. 7.
n *cf.*1 Pet 2. 12.
o *cf.* Jer. 44. 4.
p *cf.* Ex.5.2.
q *cf.* Is. 16.6. r *cf.* Ps. 12. 3, 4. s *cf.* Prov. 16. 27. t *cf.*2 Tim.3. 2. u ch. 3. 11. v *cf.* Dan. 9. 27. w *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 26. x *cf.* Matt. 18. 32, 33. y *cf.* ch. 1. 18. z *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 12; *cf.* Ps. 50. 18. a ch. 1. 20; ch. 3. 19.

torture him; and the world becomes thus a dreadful scene of suicidal warfare, the secret heart of which is blacker than its deeds declare.

[4] The ways of men in this condition the apostle* pictures: disgraceful violations of nature, and crimes that walked openly in the heathen darkness; while men who realized the judgment of God upon their abominations, not only walked defiantly in them but had sympathetic pleasure in those who did so.

2. [1] Such then was the condition of the Gentile world: one to which the Gentiles themselves bore witness in strong decisive words; but to witness against it was one thing, to escape or deliver from it quite another. In the day of judgment, says the apostle, the ability to judge another will be of no avail in behalf of him whose own deeds will be in question, when conscience, kept down by self-interest in the present time, will as in a moment resume its sway over the terrified and convicted soul, and it will be searched out under the light of absolute holiness.

It is a strange and startling fact, the ability we have to see and condemn the evil in another, while yet in ourselves, where we should know it best and recognize it most readily, we can ignore it as we do. But this self-ignorance is a voluntary one; and when the conscience *is* allowed to act, we at once discern it to have been so, and our guilt in this voluntariness.

The ability to judge is only a testimony to the responsibility which attaches to us. The inexcusability of judging proceeds from our own inability to stand before God in judgment. It is our Lord's reproof of those who brought to Him the adulteress, that he who was without sin should cast the first stone at her. To judge *sin* is, of course, always right, and we should not be in a right condition if we did not do it. Nor is the apostle here touching the question of the magistrate's duty as such, any more than that of the Christian assembly to "judge them that are within" (1 Cor. v. 12). He is not dealing with the relation of Christians to the world, but with that of men as men everywhere under

* The apostle gives in the plainest language the moral corruptions resulting from this turning away from God. He gives the extreme results of moral degradation, not as exceptional, but as showing the legitimate consequences of idolatry. There were abundant examples of it in ancient times in the unspeakable vices of Sodom and Gomorrah and those made familiar to us by the historians and satirists. Such crimes were well known to those to whom Paul wrote. Nor must we suppose that the light of Christianity has changed the heart of the natural man. Vice may hide itself in the dark when the light shines, but it is there, and the marks of the apostasy are similar in many ways to this picture of the natural man (2 Tim. iii. 1-6).—S. R.

who judgest; for wherein thou [b]judgest the other, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest [c]doest the same things. But we know that the [d]judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest those who do such things, and practisest them, that thou shalt [e]escape the judgment of God? Or [f]despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and [g]long suffering, not knowing that the [h]goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou [i]treasurest up for thyself wrath in a day of wrath and [j]revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will [k]recompense to each one according to his works: to those who with [l]endurance in good work seek for [m]glory and honor and [n]incorruption, [o]eternal life; but to those who are [p]contentious, and disobey the truth, but obey [q]unrighteousness, wrath [shall be] and [r]indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon [s]every soul of man that worketh evil, [t]both of the Jew first, and of the Greek: but glory and honor and peace to every one that worketh good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek: for there is [u]no respect of persons with God.

b *cf.* Matt. 7. 1–5. *cf.* Jno. 8. 1–11.
c ver. 21–23. *cf.* Jno. 8. 7.
d *cf.* ch. 3. 6, 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.
e *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 7.
f *cf.* Acts 13. 41. *cf.* Mal. 1. 6, 7.
g *cf.* ch. 9. 2. *cf.* Gen. 6. 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.
h *cf.* Is. 30. 18. *cf.* Is. 26. 10. *cf.* Eccl. 8. 11.
i *cf.* Deut. 32. 34, 35. *cf.* Jas. 5. 3. *ctr.* Matt. 6. 19 21.
j *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7–10. *cf.* Lk. 17. 30. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11–21.
k *cf.* Prov. 24. 12. *cf.* Jer. 17. 10; *cf.* Rev. 20. 12, 13.
l *cf.* Gal. 6. 9; *cf.* Lk. 8. 15.
m *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 4.
n *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 10; *ctr.* Ps. 49. 20.
o *cf.* ch. 6. 22, 23; *cf.* Jno. 3. 16.
p *cf.* Acts 17. 5, 32; *cf.* Acts 7. 51.
q ch. 1. 18.
r *cf.* Col. 3. 6; *cf.* Rev. 19. 15.
s *cf.* ch. 3. 19; *cf.* Gal. 3. 22.
t *cf.* ch. 1. 16; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 17; *cf.* Am. 3. 2.
u *cf.* Acts 10. 34; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4; *cf.* Deut. 10. 17.

the eye of God, where none can stand in the judgment—to strip every one of the vain thought of establishing his own righteousness by some fancied superiority over his neighbor. It is one of the strangest, and yet one of the commonest of excuses. Even the comparative estimate is sure to be wrong,—for without the knowledge of the secrets of the heart we have not the means of making it, while in his own cause no human law could allow a man to be his own judge. If the comparative estimate also could be truly made, it would avail nothing before Him whose standard of right is not a relative but an absolute one. The soul also who was honestly seeking to get into God's Presence as to its own condition could never think of another than itself. The occupation with another's evil is therefore one of the surest signs of being oneself away from God.

Judging *another* and judging *sin* are in the way the apostle is speaking here incompatible things. The judgment of God is against every one who practises evil; and there is no remedy but in turning to God, whose goodness is continually inviting to repentance; while yet His forbearance how often causes men to despise the riches of that goodness; so that if judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil (Eccl. viii. 11). With Pharaoh that which hardened his heart was just God's forbearing mercy (Ex. viii. 15; ix. 34); and so that which should be for good is turned again and again to evil through the revolt of man's will against his Maker; treasures of mercy are stored up for futurity as treasures of wrath, and a day of wrath must come for those upon whom all His goodness has been ineffectual for good.

That wrath will be a revelation of righteous judgment—a measurement of good and evil divinely perfect, according to the principle upon which men insist, of works. Those who in a path of righteousness persistently seek for glory, honor, and incorruption, shall obtain eternal life; those who in contentious controversy with God disobey the truth, upon them shall be wrath and indignation,

2 (12-16): According to various grades of privilege.

2 For as many as have [v]sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned under law shall be [w]judged by law, (for not the [x]hearers of law are just before God, but the doers of law shall be justified. For when Gentiles who have no law, practise by [y]nature the things of the law, these, having no law,

v cf. 1 Cor. 9. 21. *cf.* Gal. 2. 15.
w cf. Jno. 5. 45, 46. *cf.* Jno. 12. 48. *cf.* Matt. 5. 17-20.
x cf. Jas. 1. 22, 23; *cf.* Matt. 7. 26, 27. *y cf.* ch. 1. 19, 20; *cf.* Acts 14. 17.

tribulation, and anguish. To the workers of good, it is emphatically repeated, shall be glory, honor, and peace. In all this the Jew comes in along with the Greek (or Gentile); and his especial privileges may even give him a first place; but the same exact award will be to each. There can be no favoritism with the righteous Judge.

What a day to test all the pretension of man, and show the consistent, equal ways of God with him, which now he so bitterly arraigns! Who could face it steadfastly without terror, if that were all? These then are the principles of the judgment; nothing is said as yet of results, nor has the gospel been as yet brought in: God's way is not to mix together things so different. The day spoken of is a day of wrath and judgment, the reward of righteousness being introduced without any intimation whether righteous there shall be found in the way indicated. We shall have directly all possible assurance with regard to this.

2 Notice then that while we have not as yet come formally to the case of the Jew, the mention of God's equal dealing with all has brought him in. Nay, he appears in a prominent place, though with a solemn reminder for the self-confident. If first in privilege, he will be first in judgment too: can he face the responsibility entailed by the wonderful things which God has done for him? He will be judged by that law which it is his privilege to possess. Not only so, but the law has actually pronounced sentence, though that is not referred to here. But the Gentile without law shall be judged apart from law: he will not be held responsible for a knowledge he has not possessed. Is that therefore a kind of gospel as to him? Will he be considered as in a sort of irresponsible child-state and be let off easily? The case of the heathen, as the apostle has presented it to us does not encourage any such expectation, and he now adds a word which positively forbids it. He does not simply say that as many as have sinned without law shall be *judged* apart from law. People are prone to imagine that even the judgment of God can acquit a certain class of sinners, and that to be judged is by no means necessarily to be condemned;—a view which the psalmist has long ago repudiated. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord," is his cry; "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). And here the apostle puts in a word which as to the outcome of judgment cuts off hope: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law." Just there where one might expect a less rigorous dealing, and where, in fact, the responsibility of the Jew who has the law is not to be supposed, just there he yet inserts a word which with regard to the Jew he does not use: the Jew, he says, shall be judged by the law; but the Gentile who sins apart from law shall *perish*.

Does this then justify the Jew in his thought of a different issue as to himself from the condemnation which he readily accords to the Gentile? The apostle's purpose in all this is one quite opposite: it is to bring in all men guilty before God. And here he goes on to show that a Gentile may be comparatively in a better position than the Jew. The law does not justify hearers (in which case a Jew might indeed congratulate himself) but doers: "the *doers* of the law shall be justified." By and by we shall hear the sweeping sentence of the law as to all, and that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified in [God's] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Here he does not as yet say this; but he appeals to the conscience of the Jew, priding himself upon the mere knowledge

are a law unto themselves, being such as show the [z]law's work written in their hearts, their [a]conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing,) in the [b]day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

z *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
cf. Gen. 3. 7, 8.
cir. Heb. 8. 10.
a *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
cf. Acts 24. 25.
b *cf.* Acts 17. 31; *cf.* Rev. 20. 11–15.

and possession of that which he had no care to keep, against any comparison of himself with the lawless Gentile such as he was prone to make. "For when the Gentiles who have no law practise by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves, being such as show the law's work written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing."

We must distinguish carefully in these words "the law's *work* written in the heart" of a Gentile, from the *law* written in the heart of a converted Israelite, according to the new covenant (Heb. viii. 10). The confusion here is only part of a system widely held, which would, in direct contradiction to the words of the apostle here, put the whole of mankind from the beginning, with Adam their first father also, under the law of Moses, writing up, "This do, and thou shalt live" over the gate of heaven, and bringing in Christ as also under law, to do that which Adam failed to do, and justify us by His obedience in life, rather than solely "by His blood," as this epistle teaches. It would take us far out of our way to examine this at the present time, and anticipate that which will come in the scriptural order before us, as we proceed with our subject. As to the point now, the Greek shows conclusively, as our common English version does not, that it is the "work" that is said to be written, not the law itself. The Gentile here is said to have—that is, to be under—*no* law. It is only put in another form when it is said that he is a law to himself: he defines for himself what his duty is; (it does not mean, of course, that he has none, or has no thought of any, but) he has to gather the intimations of it from his own moral instincts or from his observations of others about him, perhaps also learns by more direct teaching; but precisely the thing which is lacking to him is that code of authoritative precepts which the Jew had in the law. *As* a law to himself, he recognized himself as under authority, as the Jew did, and under divine authority, for that is all that the apostle has in view, as is plain, just now; but he is under no yoke imposed by God as the Jew was; whatever be the cause of it (which we have seen in part, but which we are not investigating here,) he is a man left to himself. Yet there is that in him which does the work which the law was designed to do in giving the knowledge of sin (chap. iii. 20); not indeed in the perfect manner of the law, yet so that he who listens to the inward monitor may well condemn the Jew with his higher privilege and his lower practice.

The conscience also of the Gentile bears witness with his works, which are not fortuitous and arbitrary in character, but such that his thoughts argue against or for him, as he violates or follows the injunctions of his guide, just as with the Jew his conscience. Thus while as to the whole neither of them can plead righteousness, the Gentile may stand comparatively higher than the Jew.

In neither case is the law written on the heart naturally, as the promise of the new covenant conclusively shows: if it were true of all men naturally, it could not be a special promise to a certain class. The law written on the heart by God implies that those of whom He speaks will have hearts that forbid their forgetting what He has commanded any more; and this surely is not the *natural* condition of any: it belongs to those only of whom He can further say, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." The hundred and nineteenth psalm is the fervent expression of a heart so blessed.

The three verses closing with the fifteenth are a parenthesis, the apostle returning in the sixteenth verse to announce a day when God shall judge,

SECTION 2. (Chaps. ii. 17–iii. 20.)
Accusation of the Jew by the law in which he confides.

1 (ii. 17-24): His knowledge and independence of God's will.

1. BUT if thou bearest the name of a [c]Jew, and [d]restest upon law, and gloriest in God, and [e]knowest his * will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a [f]guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, an [g]instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the [h]form of knowledge and of the truth in

c *cf.* ch. 1.19, 20, etc. *cf.* ch. 3. 9.
d ver. 23. *cf.* Jno. 5.45. *cf.* Jno. 9.28, 29.
e *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48. *cf.* ch. 3. 2.
f *cf.* Matt. 15. 14. *cf.* Is. 56.10. *cf.* Matt. 23. 16, 17, etc.
g *cf.* Jno. 8.

* Literally, "the will."

2-5; *cf.* Lk. 18. 11. h *cf.* ch. 9. 4; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 5; *cf.* Matt. 2. 4-6.

according to the principles he has stated, the secrets of men. "God," says the Preacher, "shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. xii. 14). Darkness suits men now, and clouds and darkness compass often the throne of God; His ways are a mystery that we cannot fathom; but while He looks for faith now, He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make all manifest in the day that is at hand. This is as true with regard to saint as sinner, and sinner as saint; although the common thought of the two being judged together, as well as that of the saint coming personally into judgment, confounds what God has separated, and can find no scripture-justification. In what is before us here we must remember that, except in the brief glance in the introduction, the gospel has not yet been considered, nor the place therefore which it accords the believer. The day of judgment of which the apostle speaks is indeed "according to the gospel;" but is the dark background of wrath upon the sinner against which the glory of the gospel shines so wonderfully out. We must accept this judgment, to know what grace is; for God's only salvation is by judgment borne for us; and we cannot know the mystery of the Cross, until we know the penalty which the Cross has met.

It is the consideration of the principles of the coming judgment which has made it necessary to anticipate in some measure the case of the Jew, while it is that of the Gentile which is in fact before us. But it is in that which follows that the Jew comes fully up. He cannot be judged like the Gentile, upon natural grounds simply: we must take into account also his relation to the law, and finally to the promises of God; although this last comes in in a supplementary way, and after the doctrine of the gospel itself, and the position of the believer before God, have been fully established.

Sec. 2.

The apostle turns now, therefore, to the Jew, to show that he too comes under the universal sentence. The one who has sinned without law perishes without law; the one who has sinned under law is judged by the law: will the law then be favorable to him? will he be able to stand while the other is condemned? Here the apostle shows, what the Lord had before declared to them, that the very one who accused the Jews was that Moses in whom they trusted. They knew God's will indeed, only the more defiantly to set it aside: for as the people of God His Name was blasphemed among the Gentiles through their misconduct. In comparison with them, circumcision and uncircumcision must often be accounted the reverse, if the heart were what God valued. After guarding which from the abuse that might be made of such an assertion, Paul goes on to produce the very sentence against them of the law they claimed as theirs; which proved indeed the whole world under sin. Moreover, this was not the failure of the law, but its entire success in what it came to do: for by the law was to be the recognition of sin.

1. The Jew with his knowledge of the will of God did no better than the moralist among the Gentiles. Very far from being outwardly a rebel, he yet

the law,—thou then who [i]teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest not to steal, dost [j]thou steal? thou that sayest [one must] not commit adultery, dost thou [k]commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou [l]commit sacrilege? thou that gloriest in law, through transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? for on your account is the [m]name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles, as it is written.

2 (ii. 25-29): How circumcision and uncircumcision are reversed.

2. For circumcision indeed profiteth, [n]if thou keep* the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become [o]uncircumcision. If then the [p]uncircumcision keep the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be [q]reckoned for circumcision? and shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, fulfilling the law, judge thee who art with [r]letter and circumcision a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one [s]outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and [t]circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose [u]praise is not of men, but of God.

3 (iii. 1-8): The glory of God not clouded by this.

3. What then is the [v]superiority of the Jew? or what

i *cf.* Matt. 23. 3, 4.
j *cf.* Mal. 3. 8, 9. *cf.* Lk. 20. 47.
k *cf.* Jno. 8. 7-9. *cf.* Matt. 5. 27, 28.
l *cf.* Matt. 23. 16 22. *cf.* Jno. 2. 19.
m Is. 52. 5. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 20 23. *cf.* 2 Sa. 12. 14. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 2. *ctr.* Matt. 5. 16.
n *cf.* Gal. 5. 3.
o *cf.* Lev. 26. 41. *cf.* Jer. 6. 10.
p *cf.* Eph. 2. 11.
q *cf.* ch. 3. 30. *cf.* ch. 4. 9-12.
r *cf.* ch. 7. 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 6.
s *cf.* ch. 9. 6-8. *cf.* Gal. 6. 16. *ctr.* Rev. 2. 9.
t *cf.* Acts 7. 51.

* Literally, "do."

u *cf.* Jno. 1. 47; *ctr.* Matt. 6. 2, etc. v ver. 9; *cf.* Matt. 21. 33, etc; *cf.* Deut. 10. 15.

completely misunderstood his own condition, and therefore the character of that law on which he "rested,"—where no true rest was possible. So too in God he gloried, as One who had made the Jew the depositary of all the light and knowledge in the world. God and His law were owned by him, but not in subjection of heart to render Him the obedience due, but as contributing to the loftiness of his position in comparison with all other men. The Gentiles were but for him the blind, walking in darkness, foolish as undeveloped babes. The Jew was the full treasury of all that the Gentile lacked. In fact, he had the form of knowledge and of the truth as the law gave it; but the breath of life was absent from the form: in morals he contradicted his own teaching, glorying in law and transgressing it, so that the light he held but the more clearly showed his misdeeds, and dishonored the name of his God among the Gentiles, as He Himself by His prophets had declared (Isa. lii. 5).

2. What was the necessary result in His estimate who could not be content with the mere outside of things, but looks upon the heart? Was circumcision of no use because of the dishonor put upon it? No, but that could not be counted such which was united with the transgression of that which it pledged one to keep. And the uncircumcised person keeping the commandments of the law would before Him be counted as circumcised. Israel, in fact, never contained all the sheep of the Lord's flock, as we know; and the apostle will presently remind us that Abraham himself was an example of the faith that might be in one uncircumcised. How indeed would the obedience of the uncircumcised condemn the man who, having both the letter of the law and circumcision also, yet violated the law! Plainly then, one must place what is internal and spiritual before what is external in the flesh. The true circumcision is spiritual and of the heart, and constitutes the true Jew, whose "praise"* is found with Him who sees the heart.

3. All this to us seems simplicity itself; but it was not so simple to those whom it seemed to strip of all their special, divinely-bestowed privileges. The

* "Judah" means "praise"; and this is, no doubt, an allusion to it.

profit is in circumcision? Much every way, chiefly indeed that to them were [w]entrusted the oracles of God. For what if some believed not, shall their [x]unbelief make void the faithfulness* of God? Far be the thought: but let God be [y]true, and every man false; as it is [z]written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness [a]commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicteth wrath? I speak after the manner of men. Far be the thought: for how then shall God [b]judge the world? But if the truth of God hath more abounded by my lie unto his glory, why am I still judged as a sinner? and not, as we are [c]slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us practise evil, that good may come? whose [d]condemnation is just.

* Or, "faith."

w *cf.* Deut. 4. 8. *cf.* Ps. 147. 19, 20. *cf.* Acts 7. 38. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 21.
x ch. 10. 16. *cf.* Heb. 4. 2.
y *cf.* Num. 23. 19. *cf.* Tit. 1. 2. *cf.* Jas. 1. 17.
z Ps. 51. 4.
a *cf.* ch. 2. 24. *cf.* ch. 6. 1, 15.
b Acts 17. 31. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 23. *cf.* ch. 2. 6-16.
c *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 16. *ctr.* Eph. 2. 9, 10.
d *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5. *cf.* Jude 4.

apostle therefore here notes the objections that might be raised to it—objections which purported to be founded on God's own character: for if there were indeed, as this appeared to say, no superiority in the position of the Jew, what then did all that He had done for them amount to? for why had God separated him from the nations, and guarded this separation in so many ways? The apostle asks therefore the question on his own part, What *is* the superiority of the Jew? and what is the advantage of circumcision? Truly a strange question, which would argue how little, save material for self-importance, the questioner had found in it. But Paul answers with his whole soul that there was "much every way"; but he mentions emphatically one chief advantage that the Jews had, and that was a trust committed to them, and not for their own sake only, —"the oracles of God," His own words uttered by a human mouth-piece. The mass of men had wandered off into those various forms of idolatry which were continually tempting Israel also, and from which nothing but divine power and goodness preserved them too. Thus the divine Word, if it were to be preserved for the blessing of men, must be kept apart from these destructive influences, there whence its virtue might flow out around, and yet it might be secured from the prevalent corruption. Israel was in the place where these oracles were heard: how could any one ask, Where was the profit?

Faith, alas, did not prevail among the professing people of God: it was a matter of public history that it did not. But what then? Would that make of no effect the faith that was found? Would God be untrue to those who counted on Him, because of the lack of faith in others? Such questions scarcely merit answer. No; "let God be true, if every man were to be accounted false;" for so David wrote of his own sin, that God was only justified by it in His words, and man, so prone to judge Him, would be overcome by Him in judgment. In fact God permits sin to appear in this way to bring men low, and make them own His righteousness in whatsoever He may bring upon them.

But this only starts another question: if our unrighteousness so commends the righteousness of God, does this then make Him unable to execute judgment for that which has glorified Him? Nay, surely; for if that were so, since He makes all sins to glorify Him, restraining that which will not, no judgment could be executed on the world at all. Nay, if this were so, the principle would be just, of which Christians through their magnifying of grace were slanderously accused, that they might then do evil, so that good might come; but the just judgment of God would be in fact on those who could adopt so terrible a lie as truth. It is merely noticed here to show the folly and wickedness of what would involve such a consequence as this.

4 (iii. 9–20): Tested by law, the world proved under sin.

4. What then? are* we [e]better? No, in no wise: for we have before charged [f]both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; as it is [g]written, There is none [h]righteous, not one; there is none that [i]understandeth, there is none that [j]seeketh after God. All have gone [k]aside, they have together become [l]unprofitable; there is [m]none that practiseth good, there is not as much as one: their [n]throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used [o]deceit; [p]venom of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of [q]cursing and bitterness; their [r]feet are swift to shed blood; [s]ruin

* R. V. renders this clause, "Are we in worse case than they?" giving the verb its usual passive meaning—"are we surpassed?" But this is entirely out of the connection of the passage, and the verb may be a middle,—"do we surpass?"

cf. Matt. 23. 27, 28. *o cf.* Ps. 62. 9. *p* Ps. 140. 3; *cf.* Jno. 8. 44 with Gen. 3. 1. *q* Ps. 10. 7. *r* Is. 59. 7, 8; Prov. 1. 16; *cfr.* Is. 52. 7. *s cf.* Gen. 6. 11; *cf.* Tit. 3. 3.

e cf. ch. 2. 17, etc. *f* vers. 22, 23. *cf.* Gal. 3. 22. *g* Ps. 14. 1–3. *h cf.* Gen. 18. 23–32. *i cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21. *j cf.* Acts 17. 27. *k cf.* Ps. 78. 57. *cf.* Eccl. 7. 29. *l cf.* Matt. 25. 24–30. *m* ver. 10. ch. 5. 12. *cf.* Eph. 2. 1–3. *cf.* Ps. 130. 3. *n* Ps. 5. 9.

4. The apostle returns to the comparison of the Jew with the Gentile: could the Jew boast of any moral superiority to the Gentile? No, for the charge against both alike was that all were under sin. For this their own Scriptures, written under a dispensation of law, and addressed to those under it, were in unmistakable evidence. In them what the law could not do was seen; and the passages quoted give a survey, as wide as minute, of the facts of the case. The first passage, from the fourteenth psalm is connected with the statement that "the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God." The result is what the apostle quotes: "They are all gone aside; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good." The previous words plainly are an adaptation from those which speak of the search itself, changed to a declaration of the result; "there is none righteous" being again an equivalent for "there is none that doeth good," which is repeated later. In other quotations the apostle gives the detail of a corruption manifesting itself in every point. Throat, lips, mouth, feet, are all the instruments of various wickedness. In the whole path are ruin and misery; —nowhere peace: before their eyes there is no fear of God. What a picture of man in nature and practice! Of course it is not meant that in every one of the children of men there is an exact similarity; or that they will necessarily be all found in any one: and God has many ways of restraint, so that what is in any of us should not all come out; but this is the race to which we belong, and any of these marks are sufficient to make plain our lineage. It is not of the Jew simply that such passages speak; it is among the children of men that the Lord is looking and making investigation, and one cannot plead that he is no child of man. The law which he has got has no plea to make in his favor, but the very contrary. It is to the people under law that all this is said; and in the Psalms and the Prophets the voice of the law is still heard, and what things soever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law: for this very purpose also, that *every* mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be guilty before God. If the Jew, after all that God has done for him, can yet plead no righteousness that will avail before the Judge of men, then all the world is surely guilty.

A poor end, you may say, to all this long education upon God's part,—all this painstaking discipline,—all these interventions and miracles! Yes, as the apostle says elsewhere, it is all a ministration of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9). But poor as the result may seem, it is to issue in that which will display the riches of God's grace to all eternity. The truth as to man's condition must come out, and he must be made to realize and accept it. Guilty and with his mouth stopped before Him, he will then find what God can be for him in so desperate an extremity. The law has not failed in its purpose when it has

and misery are in their ways; and a [t]way of peace they have not known; there is no [u]fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to those that are [v]under the law, that [w]every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be [x]guilty before God. Therefore by works of law shall [y]no flesh be justified before him: for by [z]law is the recognition* of sin.

t ctr. Is.57.2. cf.Is.48. 22.
u Ps. 36. 1. cf. Ex. 5.2. cf.Lk.23.40.
v cf. ch.2.12.
w cf. Ezek. 16. 63. cf. Matt. 22. 12. cf.Is.5. 4-7.
x cf. ver. 9. cf. Heb.11. 7. cf. Jno. 12.

* Or, "full knowledge."

31. y cf. Job 9. 2, 3; cf. Job 15. 14-16; cf. Ps. 143. 2; cf. Acts 13. 39. z cf. ch. 5. 20; cf. Gal. 3. 19. cf. ch. 4. 15; cf. ch. 7. 7; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 56.

brought him to this: that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him: for by law is the recognition of sin."

Alas, in all this, man is completely at issue with God. All natural religion so called is the attempt in some way, with various modifications, to make good one's righteousness in whole or in part, before Him. Justification by works, by moralities or by ritual observances, is all that the mind of man is able to conceive as of efficacy to accomplish a salvation which God has wrought out and offers freely to him. This struggle on man's part, ignorant of the righteousness of God, to establish his own righteousness is the history of the 4000 years preceding Christ's coming, and the secret of the long delay. With the recognition of sin as the law is competent to declare it to him, the struggle is over, the old covenant has done its work, and we are ready for the gospel of "the glory of God, which is in the face of Jesus Christ," and not of Moses (2 Cor. iv. 6).

SUBD. 3.

We come therefore now to what is essentially Paul's gospel, which, though it is based on what has been done on earth, was revealed to him from the opened heavens. In his ministry of it we are continually made to realize the manner of his conversion, which, spite of the exceptional miracle which was in it, he assures us to have been a pattern one (1 Tim. i. 16). The risen Christ is the central object before our eyes in all his presentation of it. Our justification, our acceptance, are in Him; and in Him God is manifested as the Saviour-God in raising up Jesus. He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again for our justification. It is just this resurrection side of the gospel—and there is no true gospel short of resurrection—which has been so much obscured in general, even in what is commonly known as evangelical doctrine; and this is what has made the epistle to the Romans itself to be accounted so difficult a book, which, as confessedly laying the foundations of our position before God, we should not expect it to be. Here everything should be fully ascertained and assured; and we cannot but notice how careful Paul is to establish all he says, and to answer every gainsayer. In no other epistle is the appeal so constant to the Old Testament; and the objections from the side of experience are as carefully reviewed and answered. It is indeed as a wise master-builder that he lays the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 10), and if we are not able to realize this wisdom, it must be greatly to our loss. Without a firm foundation, we shall endanger all that is built upon it.

Sec. 1.

The righteousness of God we have seen to be the power for salvation in the gospel. It is just that of which the convicted sinner is most afraid. He can believe that God is good; he can believe in His love to man; but that is not here the question. While careless himself, he could believe or hope that God would be found equally careless as to sin; but now the question of righteousness cannot so easily be settled; and God must be righteous in all He does. It is indeed the wonder of divine grace that it should reign through righteousness—that righteousness itself should provide and secure blessing for the lost and hopeless. And

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. iii. 21–v. 11.)
God manifested for us in Christ risen.

SECTION 1. (Chap. iii. 21–31.)
A propitiation, for grace in righteousness towards all.

1 (21–26): No difference naturally, and none in the provision made for faith.

1. BUT now [a]apart from law [b]righteousness of God is manifested, being [c]witnessed by the law and the prophets,—even righteousness of God through [d]faith of Jesus Christ unto [e]all, and over all * them that believe: for there is [f]no difference: for [g]all have sinned, and come† [h]short of the glory of God, being [i]justified [j]freely

* Or, "upon all." The earliest MSS. omit "and upon all"; but the earliest of all is corrected, and most MSS. have it.
† Or, "fail." It is a present tense.

a ver. 28. *cf.* Gal.2.19–21.
b ch 1. 17. *cf.* ver. 26.
c *cf.* ver. 31. *cf.* Lk 9.30, 31. *cf.* Acts 10. 43.
d ch. 1. 17.
e *cf.* ch.4.16.
f ch. 10. 12, 13. *cf.* ver. 9.
g vers. 9,19. Gal. 3. 22.
h *cf.* Rev. 4. 11 with ch. 1. 21. *cf.* Matt.19. 16–22.
i ch. 5. 1.
j ch. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Lk. 7. 42; *cf.* Is. 55. 1; *cf.* Rev. 21. 6.

this is what we are now called to consider,—a righteousness which not only makes possible the security of all who flee for refuge to it, but absolutely ensures it. The procuring cause of this is a propitiation which displays fully God's righteousness as to sin, so that there can be no more question of it when He receives the sinner, but the opposite: "He is faithful and just to forgive him his sins" (1 Jno. i. 9).

1. Law then is confessedly unable to produce any righteousness on man's part which can be accepted of God, or enable him to stand before God. It has done its work in convicting of sin; and that in such sort that it is proved that man's way of works can never avail for him: he can bring nothing that is not soiled by the hands that bring it. Thus his mouth is stopped: he cannot perform, nor therefore promise; he is helpless and hopeless; the account as to man is closed; he is simply in the hands of God, to do with him as He will.

If there is to be gospel, therefore, that is, "good news" for man, "apart from law" it must be. The law may witness to it, as it did, in its many types and shadows, in sacrifices which, as of bulls and goats, could never take away sin, but which thus by their own inefficacy pointed away from themselves to what they represented. The prophets amplified and made clearer these types of the law; and the hope of a Saviour to come grew through the ages of suspense.

But the time of expectation merely is over: "righteousness of God is now manifest through faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and over all them that believe." In the salvation of Israel yet to come, the Lord speaks through Isaiah of His righteousness as to be revealed (Isa. xli. 10; xlvi. 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lvi. 1). For a Jew, therefore, these thoughts could not be strange to bring together; and we must not fail to connect with such passages those which declared *their* righteousness to be of the Lord (Isa. xlv. 24; liv. 17). These are not at all equivalent things, though they are things that would fit well together, to enable truly convicted souls to think peacefully of a day when God would act in righteousness and for the salvation of His people. But the salvation of Israel in the day to come is nevertheless very different from the gospel salvation with which we have here to do. Righteousness will be then displayed in judgment upon the foes of His earthly people; in the salvation here, though it act in judgment, yet only contrast is seen in this "strange work" indeed to which the Cross is witness. Here is a judgment upon sin which is the salvation of sinners! The apostle has already spoken of righteousness of God revealed in good news to man; here also, as there, it is through faith or upon that principle, that such a thing can be. It is thus towards all men, and therefore where faith is found, it is over all such as have it: that is, it becomes for such like the roof that shelters from the storm, or like the shield that turns off every arrow of the enemy.

That this is the true force of the statement will be clear, I think, if we take into consideration what it is connected with, as the apostle goes on to explain

by his grace through the [k]redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth a [l]propitiatory, through faith, by his [m]blood, for the showing forth of [n]his righteousness in regard to the [o]passing by of sins done aforetime in the [p]forbearance of God; for the

k Eph. 1. 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 11-14.
l *cf.* Heb. 13. 11 with Lev. 16. 14, 15. *cf.* Heb. 4.

16. *m cf.* Heb. 10. 19-23; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 7. *n* ver. 21; *cf.* Job 33. 23. *o cf.* Acts 17. 30; *cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7; *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13. *p cf.* Mi. 7. 18; *cf.* ch. 2. 4.

himself in what immediately follows. "Being justified," he says, "freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thus it is of justification that he is speaking, as plainly through all this part of Romans. This justification is by blood, or what is equivalent, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and here is that in which God's righteousness in justifying is declared. But justification is acquittal: it is from sin—from any charge of it—and it is divine righteousness that acts in justifying, righteousness is just that attribute of God which is concerned in it: thus it is like a broad, effectual shield stretched over the believer, and for all like a house that with its open door invites men to take shelter from the coming storm of judgment.

We must not make any confusion between this and the righteousness which is ours in Christ. The righteousness of God is not the robe that is put upon us, nor is that the theme in this first division of the epistle. In its nature also, the righteousness of God cannot be imputed to us; righteousness *is* imputed, as the apostle afterwards says, but that is another thing. "Over," therefore, rather than "upon," seems the proper rendering in this passage, which also seems preferable because it better implies the activity of God's righteousness in justification. It is this that is directly and specifically concerned in a question of this nature. We hear it often put as if God's being just *and* justifying meant His being just, *though* justifying; but that comes short of its proper force. For, as already said, in acquitting it is righteousness alone that has the case in hand. In forgiving love may act; but in justifying, righteousness. And this is what makes the question of such intense importance for the convicted soul, and sets it so perfectly at rest when the divine sentence is pronounced.

As to men in general, there is one need, and one gospel: "All have sinned," says the apostle; and then he brings forward once more the verdict of the law, which Israel so well knew: "all come short of the glory of God." That was what the veil hanging ever before the holiest, where God in very mercy to man must hide His glory from those who could not stand before Him, proved for those very people among whom He was pleased to dwell. Love came as near as it could come, and *be* love. And even to Moses, the mediator of the covenant, it had been said, "Thou canst not see My Face." Such was man at his best under the measurement of law, which, chosen by man in his self-confidence, darkened the glorious Face that longed to shine upon him. But now, when the full object of law has been attained, and its tale of man has been told out, the grace to which after all the law was meant to minister is free to show itself; condemned by law, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption, a "ransoming from," owns and meets the requirements of righteousness, delivering us from the condition of convicted men. The price is not yet stated, but being accepted and paid, righteousness has no further demands upon us, but is henceforth on our side: it now demands our discharge from every accusation, and in Christ Jesus is this redemption found.

Notice that it is already the risen Christ who is before us, as the order of the names distinctly indicates. Jesus was, as we know, the name given to Him at His birth, and is therefore His personal name as man; while Christ is His name of office upon which, His work of atonement being accomplished, He has now fully entered. Thus the precedence of either shows which is the predominant thought, whether Person or office. We are never said to be in Jesus, or in Jesus Christ; always in Christ, or in Christ Jesus. Here redemption is found for us

showing forth of his righteousness in the [q]present time, that he may be [r]just and [s]justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus.

2 (27-31): Justification of faith, not law, though confirming the law.

2. Where is [t]boasting then? It hath been excluded. Through what kind of law? Of works? Nay, but by a [u]law of faith. We reckon therefore that a man is [v]justified by faith, [w]apart from works of law. Is he the

Eph. 2. 8, 9; *ctr.* Lk. 18. 11, 12. *u cf.* ch. 8. 2. *v* ch. 5. 1. *w* ver. 21; *cf.* Gal. 2. 15, 16;

q cf. Heb. 9. 26. *cf.* ch. 5. 6. *r cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 45. 21. Zeph. 3. 5. *s* ch. 4. 5. ch. 8. 33. Tit. 3. 7. *t* ch. 4. 2. *cf.* ch. 11. 6.

in the Christ, who is Jesus,—in Him who has accomplished His work, and is in possession of the fruits of it.

Him has God set forth a propitiatory, through faith, by His blood; this, as the Revised Version has it, is no doubt preferable to the common one, which reads, "through faith in His blood." The word "propitiatory" is that used in the Septuagint for the "mercy-seat," as it is also in the epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 5), the only place in which it is found again in the New Testament. The mercy-seat was the place in Israel in which atonement, or propitiation, was "set forth" as the formal basis upon which God dwelt in relation with a sinful people. It was the throne of God, where He dwelt between the cherubim, and was made a "mercy-seat" by the blood sprinkled upon it. Thus "a propitiatory by His blood" is right; faith being that by which it is available to us, who now have such a throne of grace, the antitype of that ancient one, really accessible, as for Israel that ancient one was not. We have boldness to enter into the holy places, (where the mercy-seat stood), and Christ gone in to God is He through whom "grace reigns through righteousness." The rent veil is here implied as the characteristic of Christianity, though the theme in Romans is not worship, as in Hebrews, but that acceptance with God which is fundamental to it. The gospel of the glory (Paul's gospel) is thus in fact here.

The typical blood upon the mercy-seat had to be renewed year by year; for the past year it manifested God's righteousness in having gone on with the people as He had done; while it displayed for the future the basis upon which He could still go on. This aspect of the day of atonement is surely that to which the apostle now refers, though the survey now is as much more extensive as the blood of this one offering goes beyond all merely anticipatory ones. The propitiatory now set forth declares God's righteousness "in regard to the passing by of sins done aforetime, through the forbearance of God;" as well as His righteousness in the present time, "that He may be just, and justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus." That is, faith which has Jesus as its object.

The Cross stands thus among the ages with its light shining over the generations past, and more brightly in the present time. It is strange that the apostle's words should have been taken, with the help of the misleading "I say," preserved in the Revised Version, to define the gospel justification as simply from past sins, leaving the future unassured to take care for itself. It is true, indeed, that one cannot speak of sins put away before they have been committed, and that the question of the future is not taken up as yet. But "the sins done aforetime" are not the sins of a man's past life, but those of bygone ages, when yet the gospel was not, as now, declared, and sins for which the legal sacrifices had no provision could only be met by what was truly uncovenanted mercy. At the best also, there was and could be no inherent value in the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. But how many questions did all this imply! How different from a sentence of justification, the hope of mercy! But now every question is answered, every shadow gone: Christ's sacrifice has proclaimed God's righteous judgment upon sin as nothing else could do; and enabled Him at the same time to justify him who is of the faith of Jesus.

2. Truth has wrought with grace: God could not justify man upon any ground which would give him opportunity for boasting. His principle of faith gives God, not man, the glory. That pride which is the devil's own sin, and into which he

God of [x]Jews only? is he not also of Gentiles? Yea, of Gentiles also; since it is one God who will justify the circumcision [y]by faith, and uncircumcision [z]through faith. Do we then make law of [a]no effect through faith? Far be the thought: nay, but we [b]establish law.

[x] *cf.* ch. 10. 12. *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11. [y] *cf.* ch. 1. 17. [z] *cf.* Gal. 3. 26–29. [a] *cf.* Matt. 5. 17–20. [b] *cf.* Is. 42. 21; *cf.* ch. 7. 12; *cf.* Gal. 2. 19–21.

has led mankind to imitate him, is broken down, not fostered, by a blessing so gained. A law, or principle, of works, if it had been possible in the nature of things for him to have been justified by it, could only have wrought disaster for him morally. Merit is not possible to a creature, from whom obedience is his constant due. "When ye have done all," says the Lord, "say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do." No ladder of works, if it were long enough to reach to heaven, could give the spirit of worship which is in heaven, and which alone could make it heaven at all. Faith has a moral quality which makes it worthy to be God's principle: it glorifies Him and blesses man, while the ruin of his self-confidence prepares him for it. It suits also a God to whom all His creatures are alike a care. A faith which can grow out of one's own nothingness, the babe characteristic, needing not the wisdom of the wise, nor power of any kind, but according to which are chosen the foolish things, and the weak, and the base, and the despised, manifests One before whose greatness, and to whose love, the lowest is as the highest. In the adoption of such a principle none that do not banish themselves are banished from Him: for the highest can come down to the lowest level, when it would be impossible for the lowest to rise up to the highest. Man naturally thinks that God should be found most on the mountain tops; but the sun warms most the lower plains upon which men build their cities and live their daily lives. How would the most expert climbers of the peaks enjoy having these things reversed? Nay, the highest peaks send down their tribute of enrichment to the plains, and nature is in harmony with her glorious Maker.

So says the apostle here: "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law." The very exclusiveness of the law, which was the boast of the Jew, was thus the witness that it was not after all the way of blessing. Could God have thus forgotten the Gentile? "Is He the God of Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" What can one answer? what but with the apostle: "Yea, of the Gentiles also; since it is one God who will justify the circumcision by faith"—upon that principle; and then, and thus, if he be found possessor of it, the "uncircumcision through" that "faith" which he possesses. God is drawing near to *men:* would it be a greater and better thing to say, to the Jew? One might better plead for him the exclusive right to sun and rain, or to those blessings which the more necessary they are, the more widely they are found diffused.

But then, says the objector, you are making the law to be of no effect through this advocacy of faith. As if the sowing of the field showed the plow to have been vainly used! "Far be the thought," says the apostle: "nay, but we establish law." For the real purpose for which God gave it, the law still abides, and its use is clearly manifested.

Sec. 2.

The apostle, not satisfied with this, turns round upon the Jew, and asks, Has he read carefully those precious books which God has given him? Of whose history ought he to know more than that of Abraham his father? With whose writings ought he to be more familiar than with those of David, Israel's sweet psalmist? Yet God has given His testimony as to that principle of faith to which he demurs, right there where the eyes of His people would be most constantly directed! What a reproof of legality, coming from such a quarter! For us also, what a warning as to truths which may be under our eyes in the pages of Scripture, which yet we have never seen there! not because they are not

SECTION 2. (Chap. iv. 1–12.)

Witness of the Old Testament to justification by faith.

1 (1-5): That of God to Abraham the father of the Jew.

1. WHAT shall we say then that [c] Abraham our father * according to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to [d] glory; but not before God: for what saith the scripture? Abraham [e] believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now to him that [f] worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh [g] not, but [h] believeth on him who justifieth the [i] ungodly, his [j] faith is reckoned for righteousness.

* Some of the earliest MSS. have "the forefather."

[c] *cf.* ch. 9. 7, 8.
[d] ch. 3. 27.
[e] Gen. 15. 5, 6. Gal. 3. 6. *cf.* Jas. 2. 23.
[f] *cf.* Lk. 10. 25-28. *cf.* Eze'k. 18. 4-9. *cf.* Ps. 15.
[g] *cf.* Jno. 6. 28, 29. *cf.* Mi. 6. 6, 7.
[h] Acts 16. 31. *cf.* ch. 10. 4.
[i] *cf.* Zech. 3. 1-4. *cf.* Is. 6. 5-7. *cf.* ch. 5. 6-8.
[j] vers. 3, 22. ch. 8. 33.

plainly to be read, but because our eyes have been dimmed by unbelief and worldly prejudice and pride of heart, as Israel's were! May we seek to have all films of this sort purged away. Were every veil removed, how would the glory of Scripture break upon us!

1. The first witness which the apostle brings from the Old Testament books is complete in itself: it is in fact that of God Himself, and in connection with him whom they all acknowledged as under God the head of blessing for them. Were they to be blessed in another way than Abraham? Forefather he was according to the flesh, and the claim they had to him in this way they pressed to its full extent. Be it so: to them then, above all, should the lessons of his history have significance. How then was Abraham justified before God? They might plead perhaps his separation of himself from all that had natural claim upon him, in order to walk as a stranger in a land which, though God had promised it to him, he never got in possession. Was he then justified by works whose merit the rabbinical teachers so constantly brought forward? It is in fact just here that God had interposed with a remarkable and precise statement. If Abraham were indeed justified by works, then plainly he has something in which to glory; but, adds the apostle, "not before God." He has told us already that "by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him;" Abraham cannot therefore be an exception: but in his case Scripture itself can be appealed to; the head of the people to whom the law was given was in the wisdom of God chosen to have a specific testimony, not merely of his being righteous before God, but also as to the ground of it: it is distinctly declared that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." This then was his justification; but it was not work of any kind that was reckoned to him for this: it was his faith; the principle of his justification is distinctly recorded for us in the Word to have been faith, not works.

This is the only example explicitly announced in the Old Testament of a person justified by faith; but here it takes precedence, as the apostle reminds us in Galatians, of any legal announcement whatever. Faith being reckoned for righteousness is clearly the same as being justified (or declared righteous) by faith. Faith is the ground upon which he is reckoned righteous. There being no actual righteousness to be found among men, God declares what he can accept as putting one among the righteous. He does not and cannot say that it is actual righteousness; which yet He must have indeed, but which man cannot furnish. For this He must look elsewhere, and we know, thank God, where He has found it. But here He simply declares what on man's part He can take as evincing that. How beautiful an announcement it is, at so early a time, and in relation to such a person! How completely is law set aside in this, although it is not a general announcement as yet, but only as to an individual. Still how easy for one realizing his need, one might think, to make the inference. For those to whom Abraham was to be a covenant head of promise, how

2 (6-8): Confirmed by David.

2. Just as [k]David also telleth the blessedness of the man to whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works: [l]Blessed are they whose iniquities* have been [m]forgiven, and whose sins are [n]covered; blessed is the man to whom [the] Lord will in no wise [o]reckon sin.†

3 (9-12): Sealed in circumcision, the sign of the covenant.

3. This blessedness then, is it upon the [p]circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness: how then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in

k *cf.* Matt.1.1. *cf.* Acts 13.22.
l Ps. 32. 1, 2.
m Acts 13.38.
n *cf.* Lk. 15.22. *cf.* Is.61.10.
o *cf.*2 Cor.5.19. *cf.*Jno.8.11. *cf.* ch. 8.33, 34.
p *cf.*ch.2.25-29. *cf.* ch. 3.30.

* Or, "lawlessnesses."
† Many read, "whose sin [the] Lord will in no wise reckon to him."

striking a figure should he be! But the apostle goes on to enforce still further the contrast between the principles which he has been comparing: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt." And the greatness of the reward does not alter the principle involved: if you buy heaven cheap, still you buy it. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness."

Here the meaning of grace is brought out in the clearest way: God justifieth the ungodly; if it be through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—through the Cross—then it is plain that the Cross is penalty for sin; it is not even for the comparatively righteous. But if God justifieth the ungodly, what work have I to do to *be* "ungodly?" And further, if I believe that He justifieth the ungodly, it will be part of the evidence that I believe this, that I drop all working to find justification at His hands. Here is the man whose faith is reckoned for righteousness.

There can be no possible mixture of contradictory things. The character and the quantity of work are not at all in question. "Worketh *not*" suits exactly, and only suits, a justification of the ungodly. And here also the grace of God acquires its power to subdue the soul to God, and win the feet from every evil way.

It is faith that is the true worker for God, as it is grace that breaks the dominion of sin. To modify grace is to destroy its power; to balance faith with works is to make men workers for themselves instead of God, and thus destroy that very fruitfulness of faith which it is desired to secure. The law-gospel is neither law *nor* gospel.

2. The apostle passes for the moment from Abraham to David. David also speaks of "the blessedness of him to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works;" and Paul quotes as to this what is significantly the first "maskil" psalm or "psalm of instruction." The blessedness is of them whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord will in no wise reckon sin. This is indeed the beginning of instruction when we have learned this lesson. And the psalmist gives it us as the personal experience which we know it was for him: while he kept silence, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long; he confessed his sin to God, and did not hide his iniquities; nay, but *said*, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord;" and divine grace anticipated even the confession (Ps. xxxii., *see notes*).

This is not all; for presently we find that this is no exceptional mercy to a David; nor again is there any who has no need of such a confession, and such mercy as is here shown. Nay, for "for this cause shall *every one that is godly* pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found." He therefore who has never known this way of drawing near to God is not the godly but the ungodly! such is the need of grace on the part of all!

3. The apostle turns back again to Abraham, to raise another question very important to the Jew. This blessedness then, which is of grace and to sinners, can circumcision give a claim to it which the uncircumcised have not? Well, look once more at the history: faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness;

uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he [q]received the sign of circumcision, a [r]seal of the righteousness of the faith that [he had] when in uncircumcision; that he might be the [s]father of all that believe though in uncircumcision, that [t]righteousness might be reckoned unto them also, and father of [u]circumcision, to those who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham when in uncircumcision.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iv. 13–25.)

This faith in One who manifests Himself in resurrection.

1 (13–17): The promise by faith that it might be by grace, sure to all the seed.

1. FOR the [v]promise was not to Abraham or to his seed by law, that he should be heir of the world, but through righteousness of faith. But if they that are of the law be heirs, [w]faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect: for* the law worketh [x]wrath, for where

* Some of the oldest MSS. read "but."

q Gen. 17.9–14, 23–27. *cf.* Gen. 15.6.
r *cf.* Acts 7. 8. *cf.* Ex. 12. 44, 48. *ctr.* Gal. 6. 12.
s *cf.* vers. 12, 16. *cf.* Gal. 3.7. *cf* Matt. 3.9. *ctr.* John 8. 33 40.
t *cf.* vers. 5.6.
u *cf.* ch. 2.28, 29. *cf.* Phil. 3 3. *ctr.* Acts 7. 51.
v *cf.* Gen. 12. 3. *cf.* Gen. 15. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 3.13–18.
w *cf.* Gal. 2. 21.
x *cf.* ch. 7. 10; *cf.* Gal. 3. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 7.

when was it reckoned then? in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? How overwhelming an answer in the simple fact to all the high and exclusive claims made by the Jew! His own father Abraham was an uncircumcised man when he possessed the faith by which he was justified, and of that faith circumcision, the sign of God's covenant with him, was the seal! As to Abraham none could deny that circumcision could not contribute to that righteousness which was his before it, and that to get his argument, the Jew must invert the facts of history. Standing as they do, Abraham appears as the father of all that believe, although uncircumcised, that God may consistently reckon righteousness to them also, and the father of circumcision (the one in whom began that separation to God implied in it) to those who not merely had the mark in the flesh, but who also walked in the steps of that faith of their father Abraham which he had while yet uncircumcised.

Sec. 3.

How plainly then has God made the history to speak to him who has ears to hear! But there is more yet to be drawn from it, which if not so plain upon the surface, all the more convincingly declares the purpose of God toward which all history moves. Abraham is here to bear witness to another principle which in the time to come was to be more fully unfolded, and to attain a deeper significance. We have seen already that Paul's gospel begins with a risen Christ, from whom he himself learned it; but he would show us now that resurrection was always in God's mind as the way of blessing, and that Abraham had to learn this also; no doubt in a different way from that in which the gospel declares it, and yet with the same wrapped up in the germ as is now unfolded for us in the developed fruitage. We believe in the God of resurrection: well, so did Abraham; and in spite of an immense difference in the application, the identity of principle is as apparent as it is important.

1. To Abraham and to his seed was the promise made which constituted him heir of the world spiritually. The apostle reminds us that this promise was not given by law, which therefore could not burden it with conditions that in fact would nullify it. For the law (as the Jew so little realized) only brought in wrath: where no law is there is no transgression. If sin were, as is so generally asserted from a false rendering of a familiar passage, "the transgression of the law," * the apostle's words would be wholly unintelligible, and perfect moral

* 1 John iii. 4. The Revised Version has set this right. It translates, "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness."

there is no law neither is there [y] transgression. Therefore it is of [z] faith, that it might be according to [a] grace, that the promise might be [b] sure to [c] all the seed; not to that which is of the law only, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all (even as it is [d] written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, God who [e] quickeneth the dead, and [f] calleth the things that are not as being.

2 (18-22): Faith, spite of apparent contradiction, in God's word alone.

2. Who [g] against hope believed in hope so that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And not being weak in faith, he considered [not] * his body already

* Some omit "not."

y *cf.* ch.5.13, 14, 20. *cf.* Gal.3.19.
z ch. 3. 22.
a Eph. 2. 8.
b *cf.* Heb. 6. 17, 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 20.
c *cf.* Gal. 3. 22, 28, 29.
d Gen. 17. 5.
e ver. 24. *cf.* Heb.11. 19.
f *cf.* 1 Cor.1. 28.
g *cf.* Heb.11. 1, 12. *cf.* Jno. 11. 22, 40.

confusion would result. Then the law would be chargeable for all the sin in the world; and the law must have existed from the beginning: a conclusion which many frankly accept, but which would utterly destroy the apostle's argument here as it is expanded in the epistle to the Galatians. There he builds upon the fact that the promise was 430 years before the law, which could not be therefore added as a condition to a covenant made so long before it (Gal. iii. 15–17). This would of course be necessarily set aside if it were proved that the law was antecedent to the covenant, instead of following it at so long an interval. But there was yet "no law," says the apostle, to make the promise void—no condition attached to it to be violated, no line drawn to be overstepped: which is exactly what transgression means, the overstepping of a line drawn. Sin is a deeper thing: it is the lawlessness, the spirit of independence and revolt, which underlies, of course, every transgression, but which may and does exist apart from any law given to overstep; but this we shall come to later.

The promise then was entirely apart from law or condition: it was God speaking out of His own abundant goodness,—a covenant with one party to it only, and that One who cannot fail: He who accredited to Abraham righteousness by faith, in the same way gave him the promise also. For what is faith but the confession of having and being nothing, so that we turn to God of necessity for all? Righteousness came thus to him who consciously had none; and the promise to him who on his own part could promise nothing. Grace after this manner made it sure to all the seed; and those of the law could not deprive those of it who have the faith of Abraham, nor claim it, save as of faith themselves. "A father of *many* nations" went out certainly beyond Israel; and for all alike must He who spake be Quickener of the dead.

Here the true condition of man is reached, and the principle comes out in full reality upon which God must be with him to be with him at all. The dead, and things that are not! how thoroughly does this set aside the legal principle, and enthrone God in the supremacy of resources which are His alone! Man in himself is heir only to the penalty which attaches to the failed old creation; God must come in beyond the failure in the plenitude of a power which is no less grace to bring up into a life which, being His own redemptive gift, cannot again be forfeited, so as to make the failure His. Resurrection out of death is the bringing into life subject henceforth to none.

2. Here Abraham again helps us, made to learn in his body the lesson of the divine ways such as undoubtedly in those primitive days men were quicker to read in nature than we are to-day. With few books or none, the book of nature was more naturally their resource than ours; not certainly in this leaving us the gainers whatever we have gained besides. For God met them there with living parables of precious meaning, and the material world became, who can doubt? more like the friend it should be than the slave that we have made it.

having become dead, being about a [h] hundred years old, and the deadening of Sara's womb; he [i] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, [j] giving glory to God, and fully assured that what he has promised he is [k] able also to perform; wherefore also it was [l] reckoned to him for righteousness.

3 (23-25): For us in Him who has raised up Christ.

3. Now it was not written for [m] his sake only, that it was reckoned to him, but for [n] our sake also, to whom it shall be reckoned, [o] believing on him who [p] raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was [q] delivered up for our offences, and was [r] raised for our justification.

h Gen. 17. 17.
i *cf.* Jas. 1. 6. *cf.* Mk. 9. 23, 24.
j *ctr.* 1 Jno. 5. 10.
k *cf.* Gen. 18. 14. *cf.* Eph. 3. 20.
l ver. 3. Gen. 15. 6.
m *cf.* ch. 15 4. *cf.* Heb. 6. 17, 18.
n *cf.* Acts 2. 39. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 11.
o ch. 10 9. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
p Acts 2. 24; *cf.* ch. 6. 4; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
q ch. 8. 32; *cf.* Is. 53. 6.
r *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 17.

So Abraham was made to face in his own body the impracticability of natural effort as night by night those pendant lamps of heaven shone down over his whitening head, and the word of promise whispered in the stillness, "So shall thy seed be." Faith though he had had, he too, with us all, had thought that that promise was not quite unconditioned, as Hagar and Ishmael were witness; and Sarah had had fully her part in that which had introduced the bondmaid as heir to her mistress. Did we ever try to help God but to our own shame? So Abraham had at last to walk before an Almighty God with a body now dead, which he could reckon upon no more, and there learn in experience what, having learned, we wonder we could be so slow in learning, that faith in ourselves is only so much unbelief in Him, a hindrance to the blessing He would give us. God leaves him till his case is hopeless enough for Him to be glorified aright in meeting it, and for us to see, as else we could not, the glory of His power.

Man then is put in His place, and God in His; God is glorified and man is blessed; his ruin is owned and his redemption found: and the faith that brings us there can suitably be reckoned therefore for righteousness; it is a faith that makes God all, man nothing; "*wherefore* also it was reckoned to him for righteousness."

3. The principle applies still for us: the faith is, of course, in its characteristics essentially the same. In its object it is here quite different. "It was not written for his sake only that it was reckoned unto him, but for ours also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

God is indeed in the faith of Abraham as given here and in our own the same God, the Almighty God of resurrection; but His power is now seen as displayed *for* us, and not *in* us. Yet it is displayed in regard to Another who is in the most wonderful manner identified with us, so that what has been done to Him has indeed been done to us in the best and most precious sense. It is Christ seen as our Substitute who was delivered for our offences, and whose resurrection therefore testifies the acceptance of that which has removed them from the sight of God. It is therefore for our justification: that is, it is, in a true and simple sense, our justification itself. The meritorious cause is, of course, His blood, and so it is stated a little later that we are justified by His blood. But the resurrection is the justifying *sentence*—the act of God on our behalf, as the Lord's work on the cross was what was presented to Him,—the work of the Saviour. And thus it is that we believe on Him who raised up Jesus: God in this showing Himself now upon our side in righteousness through the work accomplished, so that we know Him as toward us, and always so.

There are thus three ways in which justification is spoken of here. We are justified by His blood: the penalty that was upon us having been borne for us. We are justified by His resurrection, as the sentence in our favor which assures

SECTION 4. (Chap. v. 1–11.)
Experience on the way.

1 (1, 2): Peace with God and standing in grace.

1. Therefore having been [s]justified by faith we * have [t]peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our [u]access by faith into this [v]grace wherein we stand and [w]boast in hope of the glory of God.

2 (3-9): God's love in Christ to us when sinners assuring us of salvation to the end.

2. And not only so, but we boast in [x]tribulations also, conscious that tribulation worketh [y]patience, and patience [z]experience, and experience [a]hope; and hope maketh [b]not ashamed, because the [c]love of God is shed

* Many read, "let us have," but the connection is all against it.

cf. 1 Pet. 1. 8; *cf.* vers. 3, 11. *x cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13; *cf.* Matt. 5. 10-12. *y* Jas. 1. 2–4; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 7. *z cf.* Heb 6. 11, 12; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 10-12; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4, etc. *a cf.* Jas. 5. 7; *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 2. *b cf.* Ps. 119. 116; *ctr.* Prov. 11. 7; *cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *c cf.* Gal. 4. 6 with Gal. 5. 22.

s ch. 3.24,28. *cf.* ver. 9. *cf.* ch. 8.33, 34.
t cf. ver. 10. *cf.* Eph. 2. 13-18. *cf.* Col. 1.20 -22.
u cf. Eph.3. 12. *cf.* Heb.10. 19, 20.
v cf. 2 Cor.1. 24. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 12.
w ctr. ch. 3. 23.

of the value of His blood, and its acceptance in our behalf. Finally, we are justified by *faith*, as that which puts us among the number of those whose Representative Christ was, and is. So that, while for the sentence and the cause we look back through the centuries to the work long since done, yet we are not actually justified till we have believed on Christ. The hyper-calvinistic thought of men justified before they are born is a dangerous fantasy, which is as unscriptural as it is hurtful.

Sec. 4.

As the result of all this, the experience of the justified believer is now set before us; which is, let us note, the experience of faith, and may vary in energy of apprehension, as the faith itself is clear-sighted and intelligent. Yet all the features should be found, and the faith itself as seen here go on to the full day of open vision: it is a brief but blessed "pilgrim's progress," until the pilgrim "stands within the gate."

1. First, we have a look backward, round, and forward. Justified by faith contemplates the past; though it abides as something that ever characterizes our condition. The precious blood of Jesus necessarily abides in its value for God, and in its unchanging efficacy for every believer. "By one offering," says the epistle to the Hebrews, "He has perfected for ever" (or "in perpetuity," as the phrase means) "those that are sanctified" (chap. x. 14). The result is, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He has made peace for us through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). The constancy of our enjoyment is thus provided for; but we must not confound our experience of it with the blessed reality itself of what Christ has secured to us. He has not made the feelings, but has made that which entitles us to *have* the feelings.

Peace with God has been secured to us then in a way which never can be disturbed: faith has given us access into a place in which we stand in grace—the free favor of God, which as such cannot be forfeited. As a consequence, the future also is absolutely clear: "we boast in hope of the glory of God." It is not a doubtful hope that one can boast in. That out of which, even in its representative on earth, man under law had rigidly to be kept, is now wide open in its own heavenly dwelling-place. Saul of Tarsus saw it, as Stephen had seen it, with the Son of man standing in it; and that which goes out now, as we have seen, is "the gospel of the glory." We have not indeed, as far as we have yet reached in Romans, what is ours in its fulness in that central Figure standing there; yet we know that He is gone in, and the way thither is henceforth open.

2. Along the road there are tribulations: this is what the Lord has foretold, but with the assurance of the antidote that He has provided for us in the peace we have in Him. The apostle speaks in the light of experience, and as realizing the needs to which God ministers in this very way. "We boast," he says, "in tribulations also, conscious that tribulation worketh patience, and patience

abroad in our hearts through the Holy [d]Spirit that was given to us. For when we were yet [e]without strength, in [f]due season Christ [g]died for the ungodly. For [h]scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for a [i]good man certainly, someone might even dare to die; but God [j]commendeth *his* love unto us, in that while we were [k]yet sinners, Christ died for us. [l]Much more, therefore, having been now justified by* his blood, we [m]shall be saved from wrath through him.

d Eph. 1.13. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22.
e *cf.* ch. 8. 3. *cf.* Lk. 5.18-25.
f *cf.* Gal. 4.4. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.
g *cf.* 1Cor. 15. 3. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.
h *cf.* Jno. 15. 13, 14.
i *cf.* 2 Sam.

* Or "in the power of."

23. 15-17. *j cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 9, 10; *cf.* Jno. 3. 16. *k* ver. 6, 10; *cf.* Lk. 7. 42; *cf.* Lk. 10. 33; *cf.* Eph. 2. 4-9. *l cf.* ch. 8. 32. *m cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 17.

experience, and experience hope." Here is how that which is against us works for us; and notice that the very first thing effected is the breaking down of our own wills, those wills that Jacob-like struggle so much with the will of God. Sovereign He must be; and spite of all that we have known of Him, it is what in practical detail we so little want Him to be. Amid the clouds and darkness that encompass Him in His providential dealings faith that should find its opportunity finds oftentimes bewilderment and perplexity; yet in it we are forced to recognize our nothingness, and creep closer to the side of Him who yet goes with us. Forced to let God be God, it is then that we get experience of a moral government which is that of a Father. The *forcing* of outward things comes to be read as *drawings* of Omnipotent Love that seeks us for its own delight. His ways, if still they may be beyond us, are not strange and still less adverse. They beget, not fear or misgiving, but a brightening hope, that steadies as it brightens. We realize how much rather the darkness from which we suffered was moral and within ourselves than from the mystery of things around. There *is* a mystery: this Cæsar who commands that all the world should be taxed to pay him tribute; *that* made the noise and seemed to give the portent; underneath and yet above it all, a woman is brought by it—a lowly woman to a poor Judean town—that a little Babe may be born in Bethlehem.

Here truly is the mystery that endears all mysteries, and with which the Spirit given to us builds firmly up the hope that maketh not ashamed. This hope is not something less than certainty, as mere human hopes are: the love of God to us is its foundation, is its inspiration and the energy within which lifts and carries us; love that has long waited, kept back by the stubborn haughtiness of heart which had to be beaten down into the dust ere it could have its will. So the "due season" tarried until at last, when we were yet without strength, all self-effort vain, Christ died for the ungodly.

The peculiarity of divine love is here emphasized that, while for a merely righteous man scarcely would any one be found to die, and for a *good* man—one with a heart to attract other hearts—some might even dare to die, God has shown *His* love in this, that when we were yet sinners (neither good nor righteous) Christ died for us.

Such being the love of God, and this the condition in which it met us, and in Christ His marvelous gift for us, the argument is complete that the hope connected with it cannot leave us at last ashamed: God will surely carry through what He has begun in our behalf, and save eternally those who are already justified by the blood of Christ. Love like this will not relax its hold upon us, nor power be lacking where righteousness has been in such a manner put upon the side of love. Thus the sure coming glory brightens all the clouds that hang over the road that leads there.

3. The work within us corresponds to the work done for us in sustaining such an assurance. The work of Christ has done more than put away our sins: it has reconciled us to God. His Son dying for our sins, when brought by the Spirit home to us in its persuasive power, wins effectually the heart to God. If,

3 (10, 11): Reconciled, and saved in the risen Christ, we joy in God through Him.

3. For if, being [n]enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by* his [o]life. And not only so, but we [p]boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the [q]reconciliation.

n *cf.* ch. 8.7. *cf.* Col.1.21, 22. *cf.*Gal.1.13.
o *cf.* Jno.14. 19. *cf.* Col.2.13.
p *ctr.* Ps.77. 3. *cf.* Ps. 43.4. *cf.* 1 Tim.1.

* Or "in the power of."

17. q *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 18-21; *cf.* Col. 1. 20, 21.

when we were enemies, He could so reconcile us, how much more will He bring through in spite of every difficulty, those so reconciled? We see here that reconciliation is not an after-effect upon the saint, as some would make it, but that which brings him out of his enmity, in heart to God. The apostle has not the idea of an unreconciled Christian, any more than he would have of an unjustified one. "We have now received the reconciliation" is said of all.

Moreover the "death" of His Son does not as yet imply what is presently deduced from it, our death with Him, but is put in contrast with His "life" by which we shall be saved, but obviously also to emphasize the love of God in giving up His Son to this. "His *blood*," spoken of in connection with justification, would not have been at all suited to the connection here. The point here is the effect for the heart; and therefore the closing words which bring before us the "joy in God" which is the consequence in the reconciled soul.

But the mention of His "life" is, doubtless, a link with what is to follow. To take it, as some do, as referring to the Lord's life on earth before death is out of harmony with the whole doctrine of these chapters, in which from the beginning to the end, in perfect relation to Paul's gospel of the glory, it is the risen Christ who is before us. In the gospel of John also, who, as has been often noticed, comes so near to Paul in truths peculiar to him, the Lord distinctly says to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). No one will dispute that these words refer to His life in resurrection; and the thought is entirely similar to what we have here. We are "bound in the bundle of life" with the Lord of glory; and this assures us of our eternal salvation. This doctrine we shall have in the second part of the epistle.

Here then the first division of the epistle ends. We see that the righteousness of God in the justification of the ungodly by faith in Christ, and through His blood shed for sinners, is the great subject of it. The position of the believer, except so far as his security from the wrath to come is concerned, is scarcely touched upon as yet. There is no question as yet of his nature as born of Adam, but simply of his sins. We have nothing as yet of the flesh nor of the old man; nothing about life in Christ; nothing about the facts or fruits of the indwelling of the Spirit. All this remains to be considered in the second part of the epistle, which treats of our place in Christ, and of the results of this glorious truth in blessing for the Christian.

Div. 2.

We enter now upon the most difficult part of the epistle; the right apprehension of which, moreover, is of fundamental importance in regard to the whole character and power of the Christian life. We must seek therefore to give it the most earnest attention, while assured that here as elsewhere the Spirit alone can enable us to know the value and blessedness of what is unfolded to us.

The basic truth all through is that of our new relationship to Christ as the new creation-Head, in whom it abides before God in unchanging acceptance and favor with Him. As the old creation fell in Adam, so the new creation stands in Christ; and as our part in the old creation was through the life transmitted to us from Adam, so the life received from the Last Adam brings us into the new, and gives us a place in Him. "In Christ" means identification with Christ as our Representative in glory. By this also we are identified with Him

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. v. 12–viii.)

Deliverance by our new relationship to Christ, in whom we are dead to sin and law.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. v. 12–21.)

Christ our new creation Head.

1 (12-14): Entrance of sin and death through the first Adam, the figure of One to come.

1. WHEREFORE [this is] as by [r]one man sin entered into the world, and [s]death through sin, and so death [t]came through to all men, for that [u]all have sinned. For [v]until law sin was in the world, but sin is

[r] *cf.* Gen. 3. 6-18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22.
[s] ch. 6. 23. *cf.* Jas. 1. 15.
[t] *cf.* Heb. 9. 27.
[u] *cf.* ch. 3. 19, 20. *cf.* vers. 17, 21.
[v] *cf.* Gen. 6. 5, 6. *cf.* Gen. 13. 13. *cf.* Lev. 18. 3, 24.

in His death, and are thus judicially freed from all that attached to us as men of a fallen race. We have died out of it in our death with Christ; our old man is crucified with Him; we are dead to sin, as He died to it once for all, and are alive to God in Him.

For practical deliverance however we need the settlement of a further question, and the realization of a new power. We are dead with Christ to law also, that we may be united to another husband, and so bring forth fruit to God. Here, as soon as we speak of union, we must have more than life in Christ, and there comes in the new power, that of the Spirit. We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, as indwelt by the Spirit, and the law of the Spirit, which is at the same time that of life in Christ Jesus, delivers us from the law of sin and death. In this connection all the working of law while we are under it as a principle is shown us in the experience of an undelivered man; which works on to entire self-despair, and thus to the end of self-occupation: he learns in this way his freedom to turn from himself and be occupied with Christ, and so ability to bring forth fruit.

The walk in the Spirit is shown us in what follows, though still through a groaning world, and in suffering therefore, while in expectation of the glory of the children of God, for which the whole creation groans together. For our need meanwhile the Spirit becomes our effectual intercessor, and all things work together for good to those who love God. This part ends with a glowing utterance of triumph in the omnipotent supremacy of the goodness of God in behalf of the objects of His eternal purposes.

SUBD. 1.

We begin then with Christ as Head of new creation, in contrastive parallel with Adam and our heritage of evil from our first father's fall. There are here many questions that have arisen and will arise: it is a much trodden ground of debate and controversy. Happily for us, we have not the responsibility of clearing up all the difficulties of divine government, but only of seeking the meaning of what is here before us. Faith's part is not to say there are no mysteries, but to wait in quiet confidence for the due time of their revelation. We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but the veil which is ofttimes over the face of His dispensations is not, thank God, therefore over His own face. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not and cannot henceforth be in the darkness, but is Light and in the light.

1. We have first, what is too plain a fact, that sin and death are here. That death is, no one can dispute; that sin is, if any one denies, the common conscience of men will everywhere rebuke him. Sin, too, is something peculiarly man's own; man has a power for self-debasement which the beast has not, and which can hardly be an acquisition he has made, seeing it is manifestly a degeneracy. It is a principle born with him also, a universal heritage, early and quickly developing. All the evidence we can expect then is in proof of the statement here, that by one man sin entered into the world; while the shadow of it over man, which the beast feels not, confirms the further one that death

not [w]put in account* where law is not; nevertheless death [z]reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of [y]Adam's transgression; who is a [z]figure of the One who was to come.

[w] *cf.* ver. 20. *cf.* Gal. 3. 19. *cf.* ch. 2. 12. *cf.* Lk. 12. 47, 48.
[x] ver. 21. *cf.* Heb. 2. 15.
[y] *cf.* Hos. 6. 7.
[z] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 45; *cf.* Heb. 2. 5-9.

* ἐλλογεῖται: not the same as the word for "reckoned" or "imputed." It is found again only in Philem. 18. The law put the items of sin into man's bill of account.

came in for him as penalty with sin. If geology can appeal to facts which show that death existed before man upon the earth it in no wise touches the truth of this at all. Scripture never asserts that death came in for the beast through sin or through man. Nor does it assert that there was no death in the beginning, which is a mere mistaken inference from the green herb assigned to the living thing for food. The "world" of which the apostle speaks here is doubtless the world of men alone: it is "to all *men*" that death came through, as he says.

He adds even as to men as the ground of the penalty, "for that all have sinned;" and here the main discussion immediately begins. There are a number of different explanations of these words, but most of them really alter what they would explain. To read "in whom all sinned" is impossible as a translation; nor can one say "all have become sinful," or "all have been treated as sinners:" it is exactly the statement of chap. iii. 23, where "all have sinned" speaks of literal, personal sins committed. In complete opposition to the thought of sinning in Adam, nothing can surely be intended but that men have come under the dominion of death on account of their own sins. The contradiction of fact is, of course, the main, if not the only reason why this is not at once accepted. How could this be true of infants? is naturally asked, and might at first sight seem unanswerable. But the passage just now referred to has exactly the same thing to be said of it, but where it is no difficulty at all. If it be a question of salvation, infants cannot be saved as sinners, nor can be justified by faith; yet no one would contend on this account that this could not be God's way of salvation because it did not take in infants. The apostle speaks there simply of those standing in their own responsibility before God. Infants are therefore understood as excepted, and that applies to both statements. As soon as you can speak of accountability at all this becomes true that all sin; and that shows of course the ruin of the race. Death has come in through the one man Adam, as has been said; and yet not because of any such formal covenant with Adam on behalf of his posterity as many plead, but because through that mysterious oneness of the race which, whatever question may be raised about it, cannot be denied, the fall of Adam *did* involve the corruption of his posterity. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" asks Job: and answers himself, "Not one." Thus the "all have sinned" in this place demonstrates the fitness of God's sentence of death passed upon all. For, if you plead the exception of infants from the penalty on Adam, your exception ought to plead for them as much as to their exemption from the inheritance of corruption, which is a more terrible fact, and from which yet the justice of God does not exempt them. The greater fact of the general corruption proved so sadly as each emerges into the common world of men, implies the parallel fact of death as its accompaniment. But in this very way the consideration of the case of infants may be omitted from the statement before us.

It is thought by many that at this point the apostle breaks off his argument, to introduce a long parenthetical explanation as to the relation of law to sin, and as to the parallel between Adam and Christ, returning to complete his thought in the eighteenth verse. This (which is what we find in the common version, and which has been exchanged in the revised for the worse hypothesis of a mere broken statement which never reaches an orderly conclusion) seems, however, only to derange the true relation of parts to one another as expressed in the structure. The parenthesis seems too long and too important in what it

2 (15-17): The contrastive parallel.

2. But [a]not as the offence even so is the gracious [b]gift: for if by the [c]offence of the one the many died, [d]much more hath the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which is by the one man Jesus Christ, abounded unto many.

a *cf.* vers. 9, 10.
b *cf.* ch.6.23. *cf.*Jno.4.10.
c ver. 12.
d *cf.* ver.10. *cf.* ver. 20; *cf.*1 Tim. 1. 14.

contains, as well as too anticipative of the after-conclusion. The twelfth verse, moreover, is not broken off in the manner supposed. The proper view seems rather, as others have suggested, that the introductory "wherefore," referring clearly to what has gone before, teaches us to look *back* for the true commencement of that to which the twelfth verse becomes then itself the conclusion; though this is not fully reached without a more explicit disclosure of what was in the apostle's mind, that Adam was in fact the "figure," or "type, of the One that was to come." For in the gospel upon which he had been dwelling was already announced that principle of the One standing for the many, to which he now explicitly calls attention. We may supply "Wherefore this is"—this coming in of peace and reconciliation through Christ—in the same way "as by one man sin and death entered." This meaning, the words as to Adam, "who is the type of the One that was to come," bring into full day, without there being formally the conclusion.

There is, therefore, no parenthesis here; but the apostle goes on to say that sin existed before law. This the Gentile needed to consider, rather than the Jew, who would easily admit it; but the Gentile might say, "We had not the will of God made known to us, as the Jew had." In fact Paul had spoken to the Athenians of a time of ignorance at which God winked. The law had put sin into account in the way the Gentile had nothing like. Adam in paradise had a law indeed, though a very simple one, and which after his expulsion from the garden could have no further application. From Adam to Moses there was no law. Yet (with one gracious exception only) from Adam to Moses the universal reign of death proved fully the presence of sin which God reckoned to them. Yet there was no law, and therefore no transgression: for where no law is there is no transgression, as has been already said (chap. iv. 15). Adam *transgressed:* he had a limit imposed which he overstepped; but those who had not sinned in the likeness of that open transgression of his, yet died, as he had died: sin universal was proved in the fact of universal death.

In all this the darkness is unrelieved; but it is but the background upon which the glory of divine grace is to be displayed: even from the centre of the darkness now the light shines: this very principle which seems only to have worked ruin, God can transform into one of complete triumph over the evil that has come in. Another Adam shall replace the failed first man, and a fairer creation arise in unfading beauty out of the ruin of the old.

2. A type, by the very fact that it is a type, must be in contrast with its antitype: the shadow cannot be the perfect image. Here, however, at first sight, the contrast is more evident than the resemblance; and the apostle at the outset emphasizes the contrast. "*Not* as the offence," he says, "so is the gracious gift." In the fact of representation of their respective companies, the two Adams are alike. Each is the head of a race, which stands or falls with its respective head. In the first epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xv. 45) these heads are themselves put in contrast with one another: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." This gives us the key to the respective races with which they are connected: the first is a natural, the last a spiritual race. And so it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 16), "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." These the apostle speaks of indeed in this place as His *brethren*, rather than His seed; as in the present epistle also He is seen as "the Firstborn among many brethren" (viii. 29). And because He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11).

And not as by one sin is that which is given: for the judgment is by [e]one to condemnation; but the gracious gift is of [f]many offences unto an accomplished [g]righteousness. For if by the offence of the one, through the

[e] *cf.* Gen. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 32.
[f] *cf.* ch. 3. 13-18. *cf.* Ps. 19. 12.
[g] ver. 18. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 9.

Here the identity of the Head with the race is affirmed: and in this sense Adam, though the father of all, would also be the firstborn among many brethren. As to the Lord, it is with the seed of Abraham that He is allied; that is, with the family of faith, the spiritually born. And because the children God has given him are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part in the same (ver. 14).

But He is truly also the Last Adam of this spiritual race, Himself the Quickening Spirit to them all, Himself their life; "for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21).

Thus here are two Adams, alike in this, yet how unlike! the Adam of the old, and the Adam of the new creation! In connection with the one, spite of the beauty and uprightness in which he first came forth from under the Creator's hands, his personal history was little more than that of the "offence," the fatal effects of which he transmitted to his seed. With the other comes, not penalty or requirement, but "gift." How great must be the contrast then! If God is inflicting judgment, this must be executed according to the demand of divine righteousness; but here therefore can be no overplus. But if God be *giving*, what shall limit Him as to the gift He chooses to bestow? Any gift to fallen creatures must be of His grace; but if it be grace upon grace, who shall say Him nay? Has He in fact come in in Christ simply to undo the effect of the fall, and set man where he was before it? Nay, if the offence was disastrous, and the many died, much more has the grace of God and His gift in grace, which is by the One, Jesus Christ, abounded towards many! Innocence has indeed been lost, with the continuance of life on earth, and the Eden paradise; but righteousnes and holiness have been gained, eternal life, and the paradise of God! Here is the divine balance-sheet: it would not suit God to have a poorer exhibit; it would not suit Him to have no gain in glory: and this is what the Second Man has toiled for, as the first wrought the shame.

And there is another contrast: one sin committed brought in condemnation; such was the holiness of God, a holiness still unchanged; yet now after many offences having been committed, His gracious gift is of a state of accomplished righteousness.

Again, if the men through whom those diverse effects are wrought are thus in contrast, and if the present effects themselves carry on the contrast, how will the future bring this out in full result! If the work of the one man has brought about the present reign of death, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One Man, Christ. It is not merely that life will reign instead of death, but that the recipients of this grace themselves will reign in an unending life.

Thus we see, all through, that the parallel here is one of contrast, and that Christ having come in to undo the work of the fallen first man, in a grace which, though ever righteous, cannot be measured by righteousness simply, as the judgment is, there must be as the result a plenitude of blessing which shall glorify God where sin has come in to dishonor Him, and thus shall raise up the fallen creature also to a height far above the level of his original condition. These things are necessary concomitants: God is going to "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

This is indeed directly contrary to some thoughts which have been largely held and thought to be favored by the well-known phrase used by the apostle Peter in his address to the Jews soon after Pentecost, in which he speaks of a restitution of all things to be brought about at Christ's reappearing, and "of which" he says, "God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since

one death reigned, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness [h] reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

h *cf.* ch. 8. 17. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 5.

the world began" (Acts iii. 21). This has been thought decisive that eternity will be but a final return to what were God's first thoughts when He created man, and which He could not permit the entrance of sin to set aside. Or else, it is contended, Satan would really have gained a victory in compelling Him to change His plan about Eden and the earth. And this has been carried so far by some that the "new earth" of which the prophets speak has been supposed to be indeed a "Paradise regained," in which generations of men would in the ordinary way of nature but without death, replace one another to all eternity. Adam, instead of Christ, is thus made to have been God's first thought, Christ an expedient when the first man failed; the paradisaic state is unscripturally exalted, and the work of Christ and its consequences really, however unintentionally, degraded. For it should be plain that as the Person is far greater, so His work must be, and so the fruits of it. Where the original creation is taken as the perfection of what was in the mind of Him who created it, Adam is considered to have been a creature made for heaven, to whom it was secured by covenant that he would receive it as the reward of his well-doing; and the ten commandments are carried back some two thousand five hundred years before they were given, to be the measure of what he was required to fulfil. Thus when he failed, Christ is supposed to have taken up the broken contract, and to have gained for us, by his fulfilment of it, what Adam lost.

All this is in complete forgetfulness of what Christ is, and of the work which lay before Him; it is to forget that almost throughout what we have been looking at, the parallel between the two Adams is one of contrast. Here let the pregnant figure of the trespass-offering speak—which is the divine thought of restitution given to us. Plainly, had man in that case fulfilled the law as regards God and his fellow, there need have been, and would have been, no offering at all. If Christ even had taken up Adam's broken contract to fulfil it, death would have had no place in such work, because death was the penalty of the breach of it. If He could thus have fulfilled the work for Adam, and given to God the obedience in which Adam failed, and in Adam's behalf, the punishment of the breach of it could not have been required of Him. What was wrong would have been set right without the shedding of blood. But "without shedding of blood is no remission;" and "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Heb. ix. 22; Gal. ii. 21).

But furthermore, in this matter of the trespass-offering, after the injury inflicted had been duly estimated and made up, still restitution in God's thought of it, was not complete until there had been added to it a "fifth part more." Thus the person who offered the offering did more than could have been required if the trespass had not been committed, and the injured person was now a gainer to that extent. In the trespass-offering two aspects of it are distinguished which would not come together in the ordinary use of it; there was a Godward and a manward side, which in Christ's fulfilment of it *did* come together. God and man are both considered as suffering through sin, and are both now gainers through the work of Christ; and this is the "much more" of the apostle in the fifth of Romans, and this is the "fifth part more" of the book of Leviticus.

To see it in anywise, we must have clearly before our eyes the contrast between these two of whom we have been speaking: what did God gain, to speak humanly, by Christ's work? what could He have gained, at the best, by Adam's?

What was the first man, Adam?

Not, if we are to take Scripture, a being formed for heaven, but in express contrast with heaven, "of the earth, earthy." If I open Genesis, I find no hope of heaven held out to him there, no idea of being raised above the estate in which he was created. I find no works enjoined, for which he was to be

3 (18 21): The actual realization.

3. So then as by one offence [the bearing] upon all men was toward [h]condemnation, so also through one accomplished righteousness [the bearing] upon all men is toward [i]justification of life. For as through the one

[h] ver.12,etc. cf.Gal.3.22.
[i] cf.Col.2.13 cf.Jno.5.24. cf. 2 Cor. 3. 6-11.

rewarded; one prohibition only of a thing which would have had no moral character attaching to it, had it not been forbidden. Created very good, he was to keep his first estate, not seek a new one. Nor, until sin had made our estate evil, and only with fallen man, do we find a thought of a creature quitting its estate, except as sin. So with "the angels who kept not their first estate," of whom Jude speaks. Not made to toil at working out a righteousness, but to enjoy the bounteous goodness which had provided richly for him, one test of obedience, and of the easiest, was given: if he ate of the tree, he died.

What did God gain by such obedience?

Save as one of the countless creatures He had made, whose happiness bore witness of creating goodness and wisdom — nothing. Had he obeyed, what marvel? Had he obtained witness that he was righteous, it would have been creature-righteousness, not divine. With Eliphaz, we might have asked, "Is it gain to God that thou makest thy ways perfect?" And had he been obedient, as angels were, would the fitting reward for it have been a place in glory and at the right hand of God? Would he have inherited all things? Would he have been where Christ as Man is, and have shared what the saints will share, as joint-heirs with Him?

Simple questions, yet needful. For if they are to have adverse answer, after all the plan as shown in Adam must be so far altered; and how much does this imply?

But Adam fell: that wrong was done to God, of which the trespass-offering speaks. Sin had spoiled the old creation, and (again to speak humanly, as we must,) raised the question of God's character. If He cut off the offenders in righteousness, love would not be shown; if mercy spared them, how could He be holy? Slowly and patiently was the answer given. Christ was that answer. Not simply the taker up of man's cause. Not the worker out of mere human righteousness. But the brightness of the Father's glory; the Wisdom and Power of God: the Fulfiller of divine righteousness, and the Revealer of divine Love. The glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. There we see it. If the entrance of sin into the world had in anywise raised a question about God, not only are such questions for ever at rest, but the way in which it has been dealt with in the Cross of His Son becomes the very way in which His attributes shine out. Christ is not merely "the Lord our Righteousness," He is the very "Righteousness of God." Could Adam have been that, or wrought it? We are in another sphere altogether, plainly. Inseparably connected with man's worst wickedness, is the display of God's righteousness, and not in wrath, but through which He justifies the ungodly.

Thus Christ's work is different both in its character and results Godward from anything that could be of Adam, asked or had. It was such as the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father alone could accomplish, and must have corresponding results for man also, for here also the "fifth part more" applies. Things are restored, but not to the primitive condition before the fall. They are "*made new*," in a "*new* creation," not the old, and whose Head is "the beginning of the creation of God."

3. It is the gain manward of the work of Christ with which the apostle here is occupied; although the Godward side must be disclosed in connection with this; but the point here all the way through is the effect with regard to the many with whom the Head is connected. In the last three verses we had the contrasts between the judgment and the grace; now we have the actual realization, along with the declaration of the sufficiency of Christ's work for all, which renders all inexcusable who do not receive it. The purpose of the law added at

man's [k]disobedience the many were brought into the state of sinners, even so, through the [l]obedience of the One, the many shall be brought into the state of righteousness. Now [m]law came in by the way, that the offence

[k] *cf.* Gen. 3. 6.
[l] *cf.* Heb. 10. 5-10. *cf.* Phil. 2. 8.
[m] *cf.* ch. 3. 20. *cf.* ch. 7. 7. *cf.* Gal. 3. 19.

the close shows the earnestness of God's grace in pressing upon men their need; law being thus a true handmaid to the gospel as is shown elsewhere. The provision for man's sinful condition is also dwelt upon, which the very idea of an Adam-head implies, a life in Christ, which prepares us for the doctrine of the chapters following, in which this comes to the front in the consideration of practical questions of the deepest interest and importance. It is characteristic of all this second division of Romans that life and nature come up in it, as in the first only actual sins, which are the ground of final judgment, as has already been shown. The conviction of a soul before God is not to be effected by pressing upon him Adam's sin, or the evil nature which he has thus derived from Adam. These he will turn into pleas in his own favor, rather than against him; and it is in this way that Job actually pleads that one cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean: humiliated he is by it, but not condemned. On the other hand, spite of such pleas, conscience will bring him in guilty for every actual sin, and from its decision there is no appeal. Whatever man's nature may be, he, unlike the beast, is responsible to control it morally, and not be controlled by it. In the power of the will, in which lies man's true manhood, his accountability to God is found as well.

It is when one is converted and the bent of the will is Godward, that the hindrance of a fallen nature is proved in bitter experience. This we shall have to consider in a little while. At present it is only the presence of such a nature that is recognized, along with the parallel communication of a new nature from the new source of life to a believer, the new Adam-Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hitherto we have had the fruits of the old nature, the actual sins. Now we are to look deeper; remembering all the time what we have spoken of as to human accountability being due to something beside nature. We never speak of nature acting indeed, except as implying a certain passivity in the man himself, and not the man in his full manhood energy.

The contrast now is only that necessarily involved in the two heads that are before us; although in the statement of the general bearing of accomplished righteousness "all men" have not the same relation to the Second that they had to the first. This is of them, however, and not of Him; the express purpose of what is said here being to show that it is not from any lack of sufficiency for all that the effect of the work of recovery does not reach to the full extent of the fall. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. iii. 9), and therefore could not leave any without provision made: "as by one offence (the bearing) towards all men was to condemnation, thus also through one accomplished righteousness (the bearing) toward all men is to justification of life." Besides the universal aspect, there is only the last expression that is new. "Justification of life" is not found anywhere else in Scripture, and in itself it may have more than one significance. What is commonly understood by it is "justification *to* life,"—a clearing from charge which entitles the justified man to life instead of the death that would have been his due. This is not unfitted to stand over against condemnation also, though justification alone would sufficiently do this.

But "justification attaching to life" introduces an important thought that is not found in the former way of reading it, and which connects moreover with what is soon to follow. If Christ be really another Adam, a life communicated to those who are of His race forms a necessary part of this idea. The Last Adam is thus a "quickening Spirit," a communicator of life in a way transcending all that could be attributed to the first. The life, as the Lord has taught us, is eternal life, and thus we are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. All this we have had fully in the Gospel of

might abound; but [n] where sin abounded, grace did overabound: that as sin reigned in death, even so might [o] grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

n *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12–16. *cf.* Mk. 16. 9. *cf.* Is. 1. 18.
o *cf.* ch. 6. 14. *cf.* Tit. 2. 12–14; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

John, and need not repeat here what is indeed simple and familiar truth. But this life, in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, is resurrection life. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," He says, speaking of it, "it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). And so again He speaks of him that believeth in Him as one with death now behind him, and never to know it (chap. xi. 26). Thus the life being resurrection life, the virtue of His death is in it for us, and His resurrection is our justification: we have justification attaching to the life we have in Him—"justification of life." Brought into a new creation by our part in the Last Adam, His death is our severance from all that judicially attached to us in the old; "if any man be in Christ, (it is) new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Thus the "one accomplished righteousness" has wrought for us.*

This is its bearing towards all men—most important to be stated to vindicate the grace of God from what men's unbelief might bring against it. In the actual result the apostle cannot speak any more of "all men," but once more of "the many." "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were brought into the state of sinners,"—there is the sinful state, the heritage of uncleanness derived from the uncleanness of our fallen parents,—"so through the obedience of the One, the many shall be brought into the state of righteous." This last, no doubt, includes both the justification and the life. Notice here that "the obedience of One" brings in the burnt-offering aspect of Christ's work, the full sweet savor. To stand in Christ is not merely to have our sins put away, nor even (what we have not yet come to) our old man set aside, but it is to be accepted in all the preciousness for God of His obedience.

Thus there is a growing fulness in the statements here. They are not mere repetitions of the same, however blessed, truth. They go on swelling in an increasing triumph of divine goodness overmastering evil. In the closing strain the law takes its place and acts its part, only apparently to make the tale of sin more disheartening, and yet in the end to make victorious grace manifestly supreme and lift it to its throne of glory. "Law came in by the way that the offence might abound:"—did that need? one might ask; was it not to add difficulty to difficulty—to make greater the distress that it could not relieve? So it would indeed seem, and not only seem, but so it really was: law, as we shall see fully in the argument of the seventh chapter, by its very opposition to the innate evil only arouses it to full activity and communicates to it new strength: "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56). This was indeed its mission; which if that were all, would be but disaster—a ministration of death and condemnation indeed! (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9); but it came in by the way, says the apostle,—to fulfil a temporary purpose, in making manifest the hopeless condition of man apart from grace, when every command on God's part arouses the hostility of man's heart against it: "the law entered that the offence might abound"! Yes, but that man learning himself by this, grace may be known as grace, and so received; "that as sin reigned in death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." How suitably the ascription of Lordship to the glorious Conqueror closes this wondrous recital of what we owe to Him! It is this heart-homage to Him which

* This "one accomplished righteousness" corresponds to the obedience of One, spoken of just below, and is in contrast with the offense and disobedience of the first Adam. It would seem to include the Lord's death and resurrection, in which God's righteousness was declared. It has nothing to do, directly, with our Lord's own personal righteousness, save as that fitted Him to be the unblemished sacrifice. In His death righteousness in grace toward man was fulfilled and in His resurrection it was proclaimed.—S. P.

1 (1-4): Our initiation into newness of life.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. vi.)

Dead with Christ to sin, no more to be in bondage to it.

1. WHAT shall we say then? Are we to [p]continue in sin, that grace may abound? Far be the thought. We who have [q]died to sin, how shall we still live in it?

cf. ch. 7. 4; *cf.* Gal. 5. 24; *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

[p] ver. 15. *cf.* ch. 3. 5-8. *cf.* Jude 4. *cf.* Eph. 4. 17-24.

[q] vers. 6-10. *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* Col. 3. 3.

is of the essence of the blessing bestowed. The reign of grace is that in which Christ reigns, and subjects all enemies; the heart entirely subdued to Him, that subjection is its deliverance and freedom.

SUBD. 2.

We come now at once to that deliverance, which is detailed for us in two parts, which are taken up in perfect order,—first from sin, and then from law; the first positional, the second, practical deliverance. Necessarily deliverance from sin comes first, in order that deliverance from law may not mean lawlessness, but freedom to *serve* in newness of spirit. And yet deliverance from law must be, in order that there may be *practical* deliverance from sin. The positional is *judicial* clearing, as the use of the word "justified" (ver. 7)—"he that hath died is justified from sin"—sufficiently shows. This is not the same as from "sins," let us note, but goes beyond it. We are in Christ, who has died once and for all to that which He took upon Him, so that no question as to it can be ever raised again. We too, therefore, as in Him are once for all cleared, because He, our Representative, is. We have a place in absolute perfection before God unchangingly. And this by and by we shall find to be the "law of the Spirit," even that "life in Christ Jesus," by which we are practically "delivered from the law of sin and death" (chap. viii. 2). It is the delivering *principle* which the Spirit uses; but the question of law must be settled also, that it may practically avail us.

Questions at once assail us here, and these the apostle deals with, as we shall see, continuously. To be freed at once from all possible charge of sin, and with this from law also, would seem in the eyes of more than natural men unholy from first to last, while sin is nevertheless admittedly within us still, and the devil and the world are both around to incite and allure us. But grace really reigns; and "sin," says the apostle, "shall *not* have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under the law, but under grace" (ver. 14). It is strange, yet true, that even the Christian is slow to recognize in all the length and breadth of it, the truth of such an assertion; yet it is the thesis which Paul sets himself to maintain all through, and against all who may gainsay it. Let us watch his argument as having that personal interest in it which indeed we have.

1. He starts at once with the argument of an objector, of course, founded on his previous declaration that "where sin abounded grace did overabound." "What then?" he asks; "shall we continue in sin, then, that grace may abound?" Spite of the answer given to it here, that question is substantially raised to-day, as if there had been none; as if, in fact, it were really unanswerable. But it is true that the apostle's answer is very little understood; and even by those who are quite satisfied with it. Rejecting utterly the thought, he puts it away with another question. "We who have died to sin," he asks, "how shall we still live in it?" The putting that as a question shows how unanswerable he deems it; and unanswerable it clearly is, if only the premise is rightly taken. *If* we *are* dead to sin, then it is an undeniable consequence that we cannot live in it.

But the difficulty is with the assertion itself, that we are dead to sin. Most Christians are content to say, that they *ought* to be dead to sin, but wince as they look into the book of their experience, and are ready to declare that there never was more than One on earth, who could truly affirm this of himself.

Yet it is as plain as possible that, whether from his experience or in some

Or know ye not that so many of us as were [r]baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized unto his death? Therefore we were [s]buried with him through baptism

r cf. Gal. 3. 27. cf. 1 Cor. 15. 29.
s cf. Col. 2. 12. cf. Jno. 3. 23.

other way, this is just what the apostle *does* affirm; and that not only of himself, or of some people of special attainment, but of Christians as a class—of *all* Christians. It is true as to all Christians that where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and that is the ground of the objection taken, and of course, of Paul's answer too.

This at once settles it against the so-called perfectionists, that he is not affirming as to any one's *experience*, that he is dead to sin: for Paul is certainly speaking of all Christians, and it is not the universal experience, and is not claimed that I am aware, that it is that, that all are in this sense "dead." And we shall see in a little while that this is not given as an experience of any, but as a *faith*. His words later on are, "*Reckon* yourselves dead indeed unto sin;" and the reckoning is from this that "Christ died unto sin once." This therefore is a reckoning of faith, as is clear, and not an experience. It is plain, without need of looking further, that in this being dead to sin, however little as yet we may grasp the full meaning of it, we have another example of our identification with our Representative Head. It is necessarily true therefore of every one of us, however great the need also of having it believingly realized, as the apostle urges.

He goes on to press the truth as conveyed in baptism, which as that which brings into the ranks of Christian discipleship, has been given as a picture-lesson of what discipleship implies. "Or know ye not," he asks, "that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ, were baptized unto His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism unto death, that as Christ was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life."

We need to go slowly here, so many things being in question. It is a sad sign of the confusion of the day that thus in the very rite of initiation into what is our common profession, we should yet be so little able to agree as to what is meant by it. Happily, neither mode nor subjects are before us here, though doubtless we may find what will have its implication in both these directions. But we are in company with one of those who could say, "He that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not;" and we must surrender ourselves to his guidance absolutely.

"Baptized *unto* Christ Jesus" is certainly correct, instead of "into," though the Greek *words*, as words merely, might mean either. But the parallel "baptized unto Moses" is absolutely decisive. The Israelites were set apart to Moses in the cloud and in the sea,—to be Moses' disciples; where we plainly could not say, "into." The phrase is thus freed from all suspicion of such a ritualistic force as in very opposite interests it has been made to bear,—as if the wondrous place in Christ were conferred in baptism. "So many of us" again does not imply a smaller out of a larger number, but is on the contrary an emphatic way of saying "every one;" or as if one said, "If we were baptized to Christ at all, we were baptized to His death."

To see the force of it clearly, we have but to go back in our minds to John's preparatory baptism in Jordan, the river of death, in which men took their place as confessing their sins, and owning their rightful condemnation. Thus he baptized unto death; but it was not Christian baptism—it was not "to *Christ's* death," which is the distinctive feature of the present time, but simply to the acknowledgment of its being worthily their own.

Nevertheless it was for remission—"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins": not present yet, so that it could be a testimony of sins actually remitted, but in view of the One coming whose forerunner John was. Nor did John close without the fuller witness that, in fact, He had come. Come! and to

unto death, that as Christ was [t]raised from among [the] dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in [u]newness of life.

t *cf.* ch. 4.25. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
u *cf.* Gal. 6. 15.

cf. Eph. 4. 17-24; *cf.* Col. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.

the very place of that which these penitents acknowledged as their due! The Lord's baptism in Jordan was for Him no baptism of repentance, but the solemn pledge to what He afterwards called "the baptism that He was to be baptized with" (Luke xii. 50). Thus alone could deliverance be achieved for men who were under death, and the virtue of that death abides; so that now convicted sinners such as these in John's day, brought to own their place in death before God, find all changed for them; they learn that He has been in death for them, and find a new life for them where death was. Thus Christian baptism is still to death but to *His* death, a death which is life to all that come to Him; and here we have the key to that which baptism expresses.

Baptism has in itself no reference to *life:* it is burial, and burial has to do with death, not life,—it is the dead who must be buried. Now comes the necessary question: in what sense are we dead, to be so buried? Notice that in the idea which baptism presents, we are baptized *to* Christ, not with Him. We are not baptized because we *have* touched Him, but, so to speak, we touch Him *in it*—as to what is intended. In other words, baptism is a gospel picture acted out. As we have seen in the words of Ananias to Saul (Acts xxii. 16) it is itself in some sense, the washing away of sins: we are not baptized because they *have* been washed away, but we wash them away in it. And this agrees perfectly with Peter's words in his first epistle (iii. 21) that in a figure baptism *saves;* not marks out the saved, as so many put it, but *saves.* And this again agrees with what John's baptism speaks of, and which the thought of baptism as burial confirms. It is as sinners we come to it, not saints; and in it we find remission of sins and salvation. These are things, as we know, upon which ritualism builds; and they are facts, but of no use to ritualism. Its followers might as well try to support life upon a picture of food, or to take names for things and prove to us there is no difference between them.

There is an illustration from the Old Testament which may more vividly present to us the truth that we have here: "Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings xiii. 20, 21).

Elisha, in the miracles done by him, answered to his name, which means "My God is salvation." We have in this one a beautiful illustration of baptism, just because it is a vivid and beautiful picture of salvation through the gospel. The man is dead, and so they bury him: burying is but putting the dead into the place of death. He is let down into the grave of one who had died before: he is buried with Elisha. So buried, he touches the one who had preceded him in death, and is quickened out of it: he stands upon his feet a living man.

Here we have two deaths brought together, and the one the cure of the other. The man that you bury must be dead; and this, of course, must apply to baptism; but in what sense then dead? dead with Christ, since it is burial with Christ? That is the contention of some, and is plausible at first sight, but only at first sight; for, as we have seen, it is only the one already alive in Christ that can be dead with Christ, and the man buried in baptism is buried to touch the dead Christ and to live. Dead with Christ means dead to sin, as we have heard already, and as is to be more fully shown us; but none can be dead to sin who is not spiritually alive,—who has not already touched Christ so as to live. Buried with Christ does not then imply dead with Christ, as might be thought.

Buried because dead in sins, then? That is nearer to, but is not yet the truth. The death that we see pictured in John's baptism is the death which is

2 (5-7): The old man crucified, to nullify the body of sin.

2. For if we have become [v]united* with [him] in the likeness of his death, we [w]shall be on the other hand [in the likeness] of his resurrection; knowing this,

[v] *cf.* Col. 2. 11, 20.
[w] *cf.* ch. 8. 11. *cf.* Col. 3. 1.

* "Grown together": "planted together" is not correct, and "identified," which some give, seems too free; while it indicates the effect rather than the production of this. See notes. There being no "him," some would say "united with the likeness of His death," but this creates needless difficulty. That it is with Christ is shown clearly by the context.

the *due* of sin, and not the inward condition, which is but the inveteracy of the sinful state itself. The death here is that into which Christ came; but He did not come into any sinful condition, but under its penalty. Hence burial with Christ is the owning of the penalty, which the conscience anticipates before it comes, Christ having also anticipated that place for us, that we may live. Baptism, as before said, is but a typical or acted out gospel; with a significant protest against ritualism also: for the baptism is, as the word itself shows, and the argument also, but immersion—burial, Christ alone as the quickening Spirit giving the life. It does *not* go on, as Colossians in our common version teaches, to resurrection.* It is the confession of death, for which we are put into Christ's sepulchre, that we may live. What is contemplated here is power for the new walk; it cannot itself give this: it is a baptism to death, and not to life.

This corresponds exactly also with the true rendering of 1 Peter iii. 21, which really speaks of baptism, not as the *answer* of a good conscience, which from all that we have seen it could not be, but rather "the *demand*† of a good conscience," not the declaration that we have found it. The baptism, not as an ordinance, but in the idea that it conveys, ends with effecting this. It is but the introduction of the soul to Christ, with whom all satisfaction of the conscience lies. The doctrine of Scripture is as to this consistent throughout, as it must always be.

Christ, then, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. That for which He had come into the world demanded for Him deliverance from death, into which He came for this. But such acceptance of His work for sinners means necessarily their deliverance from the power as well as penalty of sin. Thus the practical effect for those who are His is a "walk in newness of life." The old man, as we shall presently see, is not to revive out of this burial. The "newness," as the word implies, is a newness of *kind* (*kainotees*), another sort of life. The river of death has swept over the old one.

2. The apostle goes on to show how the cross of Christ as the crucifixion of the old man becomes in the wisdom of God a means to the sin still in us being overcome. But we have to ask ourselves the question in the first place, what the expression "our old man" means. The common thought is, perhaps, that it is the sin in us personified; thus what is called afterwards the flesh: a term which we may note has not yet been used in Romans, in this sense, and the proper place to examine which will be in the next chapter. But there is one thing which is important to take into account, as to the old man, the significance of which, if not the fact, is largely overlooked, that it is never spoken of as existing in the Christian, but always as crucified or put off. It is so even in Eph. iv. 22, where the common version is at least ambiguous, but where instead of "that ye put off" should be read "that ye *did* put off." Thus it refers to what for us is past, not present, and this is so far against the thought of its being the sin in us, while the fact of there being as to the Christian a "*new* man," which he has put on, replacing the old one, really demonstrates this from the other side. Always the putting off is connected with the putting on, and the two men are not co-existent but exclusive of one another.

The necessary conclusion is that the new man is characteristic of the Chris-

* Col. ii. 12 should be read, "buried with Him in baptism, in whom also ye were raised together."

† The R. V. has "interrogation," or "inquiry."

that our [z] old man hath been crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be [y] annulled, that we should be [z] slaves to sin no longer. For he that hath died is [a] justified from sin.

[x] *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. *cf.* Eph. 4. 22.
[y] *cf.* ch. 7. 5, 6.

cf. Heb. 2. 14; *cf.* Ex. 14. 28-30; *cf.* Col. 2. 11. [z] *cf.* vers. 17-22. [a] *cf.* ver. 18; *cf.* ch. 7. 3.

tian; and conversely the old man is the man before his Christian course began. There is no personification in either case: it is the person that was and the person that is, each characterized morally; while, of course, the same individual persists all through. But in this way "our old man" is surely as easily read as it is significant. It is the person that was, with evident allusion to the first fallen man, the repetition of whom in all his natural descendants may account for the plural with the singular ("*our* old man"), the self-same man with each and all of us! For this "the one" and "the many" of the last chapter has prepared us; it is evident that the transmitted image of the first man in the many must for those to whom Christ is Head and Saviour be met and cancelled; while the new man is just the man in Christ, a new creation.

Let us now go back to the beginning of what is here. "For if," says the apostle, continuing his reference to the truth in baptism, "we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in that of His resurrection." The likeness of His death is, of course, baptism itself, and the being united* to Him in His death, is that which we have seen baptism to represent. If therefore that which baptism represents is fulfilled in us, then on the other hand, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. This may, no doubt, go on to complete realization in physical resurrection, yet surely is intended to have a present practical application, according to the whole tenor of the thought here. "We shall be" is only necessarily future from the standpoint of union with Him in His death, and its argumentative force for the present is blunted by an exclusive physical reference. The contrast between "become" and "be" favors also the present application: "if we have become united, then we shall as the result be (now) in this likeness." For as Christ was not left in the grave, so for us also the power of His resurrection must approve itself. It is contended indeed that resurrection with Christ is not found in Romans in this way. It is true that it is not dwelt upon, as in Ephesians and Colossians; yet there are references to it which can hardly be mistaken: what, for instance, does "yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from among the dead" mean? And how could the thought be absent from the "newness of life" in which we are to walk? Does not the being by the Spirit united to Christ, as in the next chapter, necessitate it? or may we have the full thought of alive in Christ, and even as a means of deliverance from the law of sin and death (chap. viii. 2) apart from this? The truth will be developed more and more as we go on with it; nevertheless the germ of all that relates to our position individually is already here.

And in connection with this it is that the crucifixion of the old man, of which the apostle goes on to speak, comes to be delivered from all ascetic mournfulness, and attains its proper character as that which annuls (or brings practically to nothing) the body of sin. It is sin as dwelling in us, acting through the body in the lusts and passions which reflect themselves in it, which in its entirety needs to be annulled. Similarly, in the next chapter, the man who has come to despair of self-mastery groans aloud for deliverance from the "body of this death;" while in Col. ii. 11 we have the parallel term, the "body of the flesh." By and by we shall be warned that the "body is dead because of sin" (chap. viii. 10), and that we are to "mortify the deeds of the body" (ver. 13). All this it is not yet the place to enter into, yet it enables us to realize sufficiently what is meant here.

* We must distinguish between being united to Him *in His death*, and union by the Spirit with Him as risen from the dead, to which we come only in the next chapter.

3 (8-11): Alive to God in Christ risen.

3. Now if we [b]died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; conscious that Christ being raised from the dead, [c]dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin [d]once for all; but in that he liveth, he [e]liveth unto God. Thus do ye also [f]reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

b cf. 2 Tim. 2. 11. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. *cf.* Col. 2. 20 with Col. 3. 1. *cf.* ch. 8. 11. *c cf.* Rev. 1. 18. *d cf.* Heb. 9. 25-28.

cf. Heb. 10. 12. *e cf.* Jno. 14. 19; *cf.* ch. 14. 7-9. *f* ver. 2; *cf.* Col. 3. 3; *cf.* Heb. 11. 1; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 7.

The crucifixion of the old man is the inflicting penal sentence upon it; and in this we must remember that it is not man's part in the Cross that is before us, but that the lifting up from the earth was that which in the law of Moses indicates the awful sentence of God upon sin: "he that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God" (Deut. xxi. 23). Thus the cross was God's judgment upon fallen man, with whom each one of us had his place naturally. The sentence is here, not merely upon our sins but upon ourselves, and here is a meaning of the Cross most important for us to realize and take to heart. The thoughts of man's heart, his wisdom and his will, received in it their condemnation; thank God, they were put away from before Him by our glorious Substitute; so that we have our deliverance judicially and practically at the same time. How immense a gain to have learned God's estimate of ourselves in nature, so as to have learned the renunciation of our wisdom and our wills; while finding the complete s[illegible]ting aside of all from before God as in a dead man they are necessarily set aside: for you can charge nothing against a dead man; whatever he may have been, as now dead, "he that hath died is justified from sin." It is plain in the way the apostle is speaking, crucifixion in this case does not come short of death, as many would argue: it gives character to it as divine condemnation, and this is for the breaking of our thraldom to sin, and the annulling it in its totality. Divine righteousness has branded it,—divine love has removed its burden from me, so that I should be its slave no more.

3. But if we do not stand any more as identified with what we were in nature, or under the doom of sin,—if it is with Christ that we have died, this means for faith that we shall also live with Him. Touching Him in faith, we are henceforth identified with Him. As we have seen, He is the living Head and Representative of His people, and in Him our life is. Thus we have the assurance which He has given to His own, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). The future tense in both passages simply affirms, of course, the perpetuity of what has already begun, and that is founded on what is a matter of Christian consciousness, that "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Thus that which was the burden upon Him has been for ever rolled away, and that burden was our burden. It is not partly removed, but wholly; there is no such thing as partial removal for any of His own. We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin as He is; and alive to God for ever in Him who is eternally alive to God, His glorious work achieved.

We *reckon* this so, not feel it to be so. It is an entire mistake, and fraught with important consequences, to imagine this being dead to sin to be feeling or experience. We cannot *feel* Christ's death on the cross, and it was there He died to sin, and *we* because He died. If it were experience, it would be an absolutely perfect one, no evil thought, feeling, or desire, ever in the heart; and this not true of some of the more advanced, but of all Christians always; but this is contrary to the experience of all. The attempt to produce such a condition in oneself ends in the misery of utter failure, or, still worse, in self-satisfaction, indeed, the well-nigh incredible delusion for a Christian man, that he is as impassive to sin as Christ Himself! The words do not, as already said, express such an experience; as indeed, in any such sense as this, Christ never died to sin: what for us might be the expression of perfection would be the denial of

4 (12-14): The walk consequent.

4. Let not sin therefore [g]reign in your mortal body to obey its lusts. [h]Neither yield* your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, [i]but yield† yourselves unto God as alive from among the dead, and your members as [j]instruments of righteousness to God. For sin [k]shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.

* Literally "be yielding." Present.
† Literally, "Be yielded." Aorist. A definite past act.

g *cf.* ch. 8.2. ver. 14.
h *cf.* ch.8.12.
i *cf.* ch.12.1. *cf.* Col. 3.1.
j *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *cf.*Col.3.12–17.
k *cf.*Gal.5.1. *cf.* Jno.8.31–36.

such perfection as was His. In every way, then, in which we look at it, it is plain that it is not an experience of which the apostle is speaking here. We could not be told to reckon that we experience: what we reckon is a fact for faith, the fruit of the work done for us, not of that done in us: because Christ died unto sin once for all, and in that He liveth, liveth unto God, thus also do we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

These last words carry us back, as there can be no right question, to those which we have heard from the Lord's own lips in the Gospel of John. Thus, looking forward to the present time, the time of His absence from His own, as gone back to Him from whom He had come, He says, "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). He has prefaced this with the assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His parable of the Vine and its branches, which shortly follows, gives us the fundamental thought in these expressions so often repeated, "we in Him and He in us," and we see it to be life in Him that is all through at the root of them. The epistle of John afterwards gives it more precise doctrinal statement, that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 11). It is a life which, all through the Gospel, we are shown that He communicates to us, and which we have abiding in us. Thus we are "in the Son;" and because the life is divine life, we can be said, not only to be in the Son, but in the Father also (John xvii. 21; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 1 John ii. 24). But this at once distinguishes the doctrine of Romans here from that of John. John speaks of life and nature only—what we have as children of God and born of Him; it is condition and not position, as is plain, for the thought of "in the Father," and "in the Son" alike exclude position. But Paul, as we have seen, while his doctrine is based upon a life which we have received, a life eternal, in no wise different in this way from what is revealed to us in John, yet developes in another manner this truth, and shows us other implications of it. For him the life is in Christ, the new Adam of a new creation, which rises out of the fallen one, to stand in the perfection of its Head before God, and in the value of the glorious work which has much more than redeemed us from the sin and ruin in which we were involved, and made us partakers in an infinite wealth of blessing. Thus it is "in Christ" that we live,—in Him who is before God, not simply in the right, which was always His, of the Only begotten of the Father, but as *Christ*, in the place He had taken for men, and as having accomplished the work by which they are brought to God; and the pentecostal anointing of the gathered disciples was but the overflow of that upon the priestly Head, which was thus flowing down to the skirts of His garments (Ps. cxxxiii. 2). So was He now in the fullest sense the Christ—the Anointed. Life was now in One who was the Representative Head of His people, and "alive unto God in Christ Jesus" puts together condition and position. If "in Christ" brings in the thought of new creation, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. v. 17), the new creation stands in the New Man to whom it has been committed—the Antitypical Adam of the race to whom He has become a "quickening Spirit." All this must faith reckon in, to have the fulness of the blessing here.

4. Now then the apostle can exhort to a walk suited to such a place. We see at once that he has no thought of sin having been done with in such sort that

5 (15-23): Responsibility and recompense.

5. What then? Are we to [l]sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Far be the thought. Know ye not that to whom ye [m]yield yourselves as bondservants to obedience, bondservants ye are to him whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God that ye [n]were bondsmen to sin, but ye have [o]obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which ye were delivered. Now having been set free from sin, ye have become [p]bondservants to righteousness. I speak [q]after

l ver. 1. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 9. 21, 22. *cf.* Gal. 5. 13 -15.
m *cf.* Matt. 6. 24. *cf.* Jno. 8. 34.
n *cf.* Tit. 3. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9 -11.
o *cf.* Acts 17. 30. *cf.* ch. 1. 5 with Heb. 11. 8.
p ver. 22; *cf.* ch. 7. 6; *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, 10.
q *cf.* ch. 3. 5.

there shall be no danger from it any more. The believer is, indeed, set free from subjection to it, but therefore in a place in which the full responsibility is his of manifesting that freedom. He is not beyond the need of the warning, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, to obey its lusts." These bodies, though with the sign of the fall still upon them in their evident mortality, can yet be yielded* up now to God by those who are now alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness to God. And it is to this that grace enables and constrains. No need of weakening the sense of it, then, or qualifying it with some other and therefore opposite principle! Nay, "sin shall not have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under law, but under grace." Shall the delivered soul call in again its jailer to make good its deliverance. Nay, it is grace alone in which there is any help whatever, or ray of hope. And, thank God, it is all-sufficient also. Sin shall not have dominion over the subjects of divine grace, is the apostle's assurance: grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

5. Everything here will be questioned, however, by the soul ignorant of itself and of God; and such questions, because of their importance, must have careful answer. Again therefore we have the objection of the mere moralist taken up to be indignantly set aside: "What then? Are we to sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? Far be the thought." Yet the heart of man is in fact capable of such abuse of divine goodness; yes, but what would such an argument mean? A soul set free willingly yielding itself to that from which God has delivered it? Is this deliverance when the heart is still deliberately seeking that from which it assumes to be delivered? Well, says the apostle, if I am addressing any in such a condition, let me remind them that here the whole nature of God is in question. Does not then the way of sin deliberately pursued, end in death? Does the gospel change this relation of sin to death? does it not manifest God, and in all His attributes? His holiness being more shown indeed in the agony of the Cross, than even the uttermost punishment of the sinner could have shown it. Thus then, if one freely yields himself to obey a master, he cannot but be reckoned as belonging to the master he has chosen, whether on the one hand to sin with its terrible wages, or of obedience to God for righteousness. In all this there rules a fundamental necessity, which the gospel could not subvert and be still a gospel.

It was necessary, therefore, to give this the clearest expression; but, while the apostle does so, he has a joyful conviction with regard to those whom he is addressing, that their own experience well interprets that which he is saying. With them he is assured, their bondage to sin is indeed past, and with heartfelt appreciation of the glorious change, they have entered upon the new service to righteousness. Melted and subdued by the power of the Word, they have been

* The reader will observe, as has often been noticed, that in speaking of yielding to sin and to God the apostle uses different tenses of the verb, which while difficult to render in English give distinct shades of meaning in Greek. He uses the present tense of the imperative in speaking of yielding to sin. It is never, at any time or during any period to be obeyed. In speaking of obedience to God, it is the Aorist imperative that is used. It is a definite act, once for all, as marking the beginning of the walk in newness of life.—S. R.

the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye did yield your members [r] bondservants to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield * your members [s] bondservants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when ye were bondservants to sin, ye were [t] free in respect to righteousness. What [u] fruit had ye *then* in the things of which ye are now ashamed? for the [v] end of those things is death. But now being [w] freed from sin and being made [x] bondservants to God, ye have your [y] fruit unto sanctification, and the [z] end eternal life. For the [a] wages of sin is death, but the gracious [b] gift of God eternal life [c] in Christ Jesus our Lord.

* Aorist.

r ver. 13. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 19.
s cf. ch. 14. 17, 18.
t cf. 1 Jno. 3. 4. *cf.* Ps. 12. 4.
u cf. Is. 5. 4. *cf.* Matt. 21. 34, 35.
v ch. 1. 32. *cf.* Rev. 20. 14. *cf.* Gen. 2. 17.
w ch. 8. 2. *cf.* Jno. 11 44.
x cf. 1 Cor. 7. 22, 23. *cf.* Rev. 1. 1.
y cf. Phil. 1 11.
z cf. ch. 7. 4. *z ctr.* ver. 21; *cf.* Heb. 11. 26. *a cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 15; *cf.* Heb. 11. 25; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4
b cf. Jno. 4. 10; *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Eph. 2. 8. *c cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 11, 12, 20; *cf.* Eph. 2. 6.

as ductile metal run into the mould, and taking form in the pattern of their present life by the doctrine to which they are surrendered, so as, being set free from sin, to become bondservants to righteousness. Strange phrases these might seem still to use in connection with the redeemed and enfranchised children of God. The apostle in some sort apologizes for them; yet that divine love has had to conquer us for itself, we surely know; and having conquered, that it has made us bondservants to it for ever,—bound by the grace that has enfranchised us more fully and securely than any slave as such could be. Yet, alas, of this bond we need to be reminded, strangely as we are often in contradiction to ourselves: we are not beyond the exhortation to yield our members bondservants to righteousness for sanctification,—righteousness which has in it the apprehension of God's peculiar and double rights in us,—redemption more than doubling His creative claim. From the opposite side, as bondservants to sin, we were indeed free in regard to righteousness. Can we not vividly remember those shameful, barren days as to good? and the end of those things is death! How great the contrast now! "But now being freed from sin, and being made bondservants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This is the summing up in contrast of the two sides already set before us. The end on the one side is what man has earned; the end on the other is the full realization—the entering into—of that which is, not simply at the end, but now also, God's gracious gift to us. This has been shown us abundantly; but notice how again here "our Lord"—"in Christ Jesus *our Lord*"—closes this subject with the glad witness of what brings all the life into that harmonious order which is the result of the deliverance from sin. The Christ whom we have known in His lowliness as Jesus, now in the place of exaltation which has given us a "gospel of glory," has bowed our hearts in obedient homage to Himself. As the unwilling prophet testified of a people of other days, "the shout of a King is among" us, the pledge of victory over every foe,—"higher than Agag" with all his rebellious rout. There can be no deliverance where Christ is not enthroned; there can be nothing else, where He has His due place and acknowledgment. Put Him only in His place, and He cannot but manifest His power; and that will be more and more simple as we proceed with what is before us now.

Subd. 3.

We come to the working all this out in experience, then. What we have had already is complete enough indeed as to our *title* to be free: it is the making good to us, with its blessed consequences, of that "life in Christ Jesus," which

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. vii.–viii. 4.)

Realized deliverance as united to Christ by the Spirit.

1 (1-3): Dominion of law over the living.

1. ARE ye ignorant, brethren, (for I speak to them that know law) that the law hath dominion over a man as [d]long as he liveth? For the woman that hath a

[d] *cf.* ch. 3. 19. *cf.* Gal. 4. 4, 5.

is the very "law of the Spirit" which delivers us from the law of sin and death (chap. viii. 2). But *as* the law of the Spirit we are yet to see it, and how Christ comes to have experimentally the place He must have for such result. For the whole aim and work of the Spirit is to exalt Christ; and alas, for the Christian also there needs for this a weaning from self which is apt to be a terribly slow process,—self hiding under the most specious forms of self-renunciation and the quest of holiness. And here is found one of the great mysteries of the divine ways, by an unsubduable self to turn one from self, and bring the sweetest and most effectual remedy out of incurable evil, strength out of weakness, and hope out of despair. It is here that, for the first time we learn what "flesh" is, and conscious captivity to a law of sin in the members brings us to the experience of a liberty which is the assured privilege of the "man in Christ."

It is here also that we find the true character of the law and our need of deliverance from it, in order that we may bring forth fruit to God; the death of Christ being our death to it, as truly as we saw it to be our death to sin before. The law is no more dead than sin is, but we are dead to it—a wholly different thing. The first husband must go, that we may rightly belong to the Second; for we cannot be joined to the two at once. And it is by the Spirit that we are united; the Spirit being as much the seal of Christ's claim to us as it is the Father's acknowledgment of His spiritual children.

As through the previous subdivision we had the reckoning of faith, so in the present we have this put in connection with experience, which is first of all made to bear witness to the need one has of this, and then becomes the joyful experience of faith itself.

The relation of the law to a sinner has already been fully shown. Here it makes known sin, and charges man's guilt against him, but has no remedy. There were types and shadows, as we know, that looked on to the coming Deliverer, but in this very way pointed away from themselves. In itself it brought upon men wrath only, reckoning up sin in detail, and bringing to an end the ignorance of former times at which God winked, and thus making the offence abound. Justification, peace with God, the glorious righteousness of God which now is manifested in favor of every one who believeth in Jesus,—these things have been fully declared as the fruit of the gospel only, and we are no longer engaged in the discussion of them. It is not the approach of the sinner to God which is before us now, but the walk of the saint—a totally different thing, and which we must not mix up with it, or all lines will become blurred, and the truth no longer distinguishable. Doubtless there are principles which run through both: for the Christian guided by his own reasonings merely argues very much after the manner of the natural man, and God's thoughts will not be his thoughts until he is content to have these revealed to him as Scripture has revealed them, and accepts them humbly without the modifications which he is so prone to impose on them. That righteousness is not by the works of the law he may be now convinced, and rejoicing in the realization that Christ alone is this to him, while yet in the matter of holiness he is well-nigh as legal as ever. God's way is to proclaim Christ for both, but often to deaf ears on the part of believers themselves, who having begun in the Spirit, would yet be perfected by the flesh. For saint as for sinner before, it is hard to accept in simplicity the mortifying truth that "no flesh shall glory in His Presence." Thus for long, it may be, in the conflict between God's thoughts and his own, both his own experiences and the word of truth are shrouded in darkness to him; and preferring the way of experience, he finds it the hard teacher which proverbially it is, and

husband is [e]bound by law to her husband while he liveth; but if her husband die, she is *set free from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband

[e] 1 Cor. 7. 39. *cf.* 1 Sa. 25. 37-42.

* Literally "annulled," the same word as in chap. vi. 6.

at last, if taught truly by it, is only forced to turn to that which he has been unwittingly, yet not the less really, resisting, to learn what it alone can teach him, and that, after all, the moral of his disappointment and misery is to be found in his controverting the way of the Spirit to make Christ as much sanctification as righteousness to him, and to have no flesh glory in the presence of God.

But whatever the sameness of the principle involved, it is of all importance to realize, as already said, that here there is no question of peace or acceptance, but of fruit and the ability to produce it. If we mix these things together, and say, here is a soul not at rest as to acceptance, then it may at once be pleaded that the reason for the fruitlessness he finds is simply on this account! Thus the lesson in its breadth will not be learnt, and those who realize in themselves the impotence confessed in the experience here will be tempted to deny the reality of what is theirs, because of the barrenness of the life over which they groan. It is one thing to find no ability to make or assure oneself of peace with God through one's works, and quite another to find, when the question is one of producing the holiness which God claims, and which it is the instinct of the Christian man to crave, that still there is an impracticable obstacle in the way —a "flesh" in which dwelleth no good thing—which renders futile all his efforts!—to have to say, not when I would find evidence of my salvation, still less when I would make my peace with God, but simply, "when I would *do good* evil is present with me," and "the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do"! when consciously "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," *then* to "find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members!"

There are two views as to these expressions into which it is well known that Christians have got, which equally, but in opposite ways, destroy their proper meaning. The one, which used to be considered, strange as it may seem, the evangelical one, simply accepts the misery of the experience here described, as the ordained and normal condition of the child of God. Ignoring the fact that it is a state of captivity which is ascribed to a law of sin, from which the law of the Spirit is expressly stated to deliver us, it separates, as the division of the chapters does, the bondage from the freedom only by some strange process of thought to identify the one with the other; the experience is taken to be the actual experience of the apostle at the time he was writing, and naturally it is not to be supposed that the state of Christians in general is beyond that of the apostle. The deliverance is, of course, in this case incidental only to special crises of the conflict, and does not affect the general conclusion which is reached at the end of the chapter, that "with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Against such a view the reaction of the Christian instinct has led many to an opposite extreme, which asserts not only a permanent deliverance from the law of sin for the believer, but a complete removal of the flesh itself, an absolute and experimental death to sin. This does not so much concern us at the present moment; and the misapprehension as to the latter term we have already considered.

1. The apostle first of all shows that the law itself declares the limit of law. And notice that this applies as much to the law of Moses as to any mere human code. The law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth; so long, but no longer: death ends its claim. He brings forward the law of marriage in illustration of this; and here, of course, every one who knows law would admit it at once. But using marriage as he does immediately, simply in a figurative way,

2 (4): Death with Christ cancels the bond to law.

liveth, she become another man's, she shall be called an [f]adulteress;' but if her husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she become another man's.

2. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made [g]dead to

[f] Matt. 5.32. cf. Matt.19. 3-9.
[g] cf. Gal. 2. 19, 20. cf.Gal.5.18. cf. Col. 2.20 -23.

it would not suffice for his argument as to the believer's relation to the law (of Moses) except the principle fully applied to this. We have elsewhere looked at this, and most important every way it surely is. Moses' law has to do with the present life, and not beyond. (See notes on Ex. xxxiv. 1-7, *ante*). How necessary and how blessed that it should be so! For if "the man that doeth these things shall live in them," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," really defined for all eternity the conditions of life and death, who that was under it could escape eternal condemnation? But God could not bind His own hands in such a fashion. The law being intended to give the knowledge of sin, and to cut off from self-righteousness, tested man *where he was*, and before the eyes of men. The death it threatened did not appertain to a scene outside man's ken, where unable to know the facts, he might dream as he pleased of the issue of his trial, but it faced him here and now. "Die!" did he die? Universal history, with every grey hair upon his head, relentlessly gave verdict against him. Yet lost and hopeless as he was on this ground, it did not cut him off from the hope of eternal mercy. Much depends then upon the truth of the apostle's words here, that the law's dominion over a man is as long as he liveth, but no longer.

When he applies his figure of marriage to illustrate the previous relation of law to the people of God, it would not have answered his purpose at all if the Jew after all could say to him, "Well, but this is only a figure; and you are not really entitled to argue from it as if it were a fact!" But not if he could say, "The figurative purpose for which I use it does not prevent its being a true illustration of the scope of the law; and death really does break the link of relationship between the believer and the law just as my figure intimates,—call it marriage or what you please."

The term "marriage" does, however, suit his purpose here in a remarkable way, as we shall see directly; for it expresses such a relation as might be abused to very galling lordship, while it none the less allows comparison with the sweet and peculiar, exclusive relationship of the Church to Christ, and gives at once the opportunity to raise the question, which here is so important, of fruitfulness or barrenness in these contrasted conditions.

It is plain that, while addressing himself to all believers now, and not to Jews only (for the lesson remains still for us, and for all time), Paul yet looks back to the old dispensation—to the people of God under it, raising no question of other differences which are not in point, but treating all as one continuous history,—a history which in principle is the history of individuals still. For the law, though God is no longer putting people under it, is that which naturally men accept everywhere as from Him, being indeed unable to think out for themselves any other than a legal system. This is, of course, the immense importance for us of this dreary detail of human experience. For the mass of us repeat the history of Israel in this respect, and have to be allowed to learn in this way what we will not learn from the word of God alone. Gentiles as we may be, the Jew is in us all, and we have as a rule to plod on under the yoke which they found so heavy, and yet would not exchange for the easy yoke of Christ. The deliverance must in a sense come to us through the law itself, as the apostle says: "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19).

2. Deliverance for us is accomplished in the self-same way as we have before seen with regard to the deliverance from sin: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law by the body of the Christ, to become Another's—His who was raised from among the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." A hard thing this to realize, that for fruitfulness also, and not merely

the law by the body of the Christ, to become [h]another's —his who was [i]raised from among [the] dead, that we should bring forth [j]fruit unto God.

[h] *cf.* Phil. 3. 7. [i] *cf.* ch. 10.4. *cf.* Jno. 12. 24-26. *cf.* Col. 3.1. [j] *cf.* ch. 6.21.

for justification, we must be delivered from that law the holiness of which is so absolute, and the severity of which against sin we have had to learn in the cross on which Jesus died to redeem us! But how natural to think that in this view of the Cross we have exhausted its meaning; and even when such a scripture as the present is before us, to seek escape from its plain significance. Even here many see nothing else than deliverance from legal curse: "that is, freed from the law as a rule of justification, we are at liberty to accept of the offers of gratuitous acceptance made to us in the gospel" (Hodge). On the other hand, we are familiar with the distinctions drawn between the moral and the ceremonial law, the ordinances, which, it is allowed, have passed away before the fulness of Christian light, while the ten commandments are asserted to remain as what was graven upon the tables of stone, as of permanent obligation,—the perfect rule of life for believers still.

But neither of these interpretations will stand the test of a fair analysis of the words of the apostle. The question of justification by law has long been settled, and there is here nothing which would indicate any return to it. In all this part, at least until the beginning of the eighth chapter, there is not a word which could even be imagined to be equivalent or akin to justification. The purport here, as we are definitely told, of deliverance from the law is that we may bring forth fruit to God. We are set free absolutely, not from the law in this or that aspect, but without any such reserve at all; and as for the law in its ceremonial part, it can be easily seen by any one who cares to look that there is no reference to it all the way through the experience which is detailed to us. It is not the ceremonial law that says, "Thou shalt not lust," nor which reveals a law of sin in the members!*

No, it is from the law as a whole that the deliverance must be. "Holy, just and good" as it surely is, it is not the less on that account, as the apostle elsewhere declares, "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56); and that which is such can no more be the means of sanctification than of justification. *How* it is the strength of sin the experience to which we shall presently come will make abundantly clear to us. We have but the statement as yet—the text upon which the comment is to follow immediately.

The statement is in itself absolutely plain, that if, as has already been shown us with regard to sin, the believer is dead with Christ through Christ's substitutionary death for him, and if the law has dominion over a man only "so long as he liveth," then over him as in the value of the death of Christ before God, law has ceased to have dominion: he is "made dead to the law by the body of Christ." Thus, and thus alone, is he free to become Another's, as part of that Church which is the Bride of Christ. This is a peculiar, exclusive relationship, the apostle would tell us, which forbids the old relationship to the law. That was barren; this is to be fruitful: or rather, that, as long as one abides in it, forbids fruit. Its professed aim was fruit, and thus it claimed the husband's place; and this, for purposes of perfect wisdom, was for a time, and tentatively, allowed,—a relationship too, which only death could sever: not that the law is

* The distinction so often pressed between moral and ceremonial law is one which Scripture does not make. Law is the expression of the will of God, whether it be in some moral command or some outward ceremonial. Is not this suggested by the presence of the fourth commandment? While the observance of a day of rest is of the greatest benefit to man, yet the special day to be observed and the nature of the observance are, as we might say, arbitrary. There is nothing intrinsically immoral in the disregard of the seventh day, as there would be in the violation of the sixth or seventh commandments. And yet the fourth commandment was as binding as any of the others, because it was the expressed will of God. So all the ceremonial law was His will for His people. But all is done away in Christ, and we are told that the very law "written and engraven in stones"—the ten commandments—has been done away (2 Cor. iii. 7, 13).—S. R.

3 (5, 6): Fruit realized.

3. For when we were [k]in the flesh, the passions of sins which were [l]by the law wrought in our members, to bring forth fruit unto [m]death. But now we are *set [n]free from the law, having [o]died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in [p]newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the [q]letter.

k *cf.* ch. 8.8, 9.
l *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 56. *cf.* ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 5.20.
m ch. 6. 21, 23.
n *cf.* ch. 6.14. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 8-10.
o ver. 4.

* Literally "annulled," the same word as in chap. vi. 6.

p *cf.* ch. 6. 4; *cf.* Jno. 6. 63; *cf.* Gal. 6. 15, 16. q *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 6-11; *cf.* ch. 8. 4.

dead—that is nowhere said—but *we* are; it was a relationship to men in the flesh, but "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." A man in the flesh is just a living man; and the cross of Christ is the death sentence, under which he lay, executed upon him, which faith owns, while it finds its deliverance in it, and in Him raised from the dead the One to whom now its every tie is; in a new and blessed life which is not of the old creation, but of the new. But, as has been said, this yet remains to be worked out practically for us in that which follows: as yet we have but the statement, of which we are now to see the meaning and value.

3. The apostle goes on at once to the experience,—though at present only the brief statement still; but he shows the nature and cause of the barrenness of the law, which while to God it is that, is not merely that. Fruit there is, but not to God; it is "fruit unto death." "For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were by the law, wrought in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." We see why the law is fruitless, or worse: it produces the passions of sins—a strange alliance as it might seem between sin and law, but it is not that, but opposition, as must surely be, and as the detailed experience will fully show: the holy requirements of the law are to the man in the flesh but the presenting of claims in contradiction to the "mind of the flesh," which is enmity against God (chap. viii. 7). It is merely chafed and irritated, its state brought out, not altered, the knowledge of sin produced, which we have seen to be the characteristic effect of law, but with the result of the aggravation of the whole condition. But we must pause here, to look more closely at all that is in question.

The man in the flesh is in its primary sense, as should be evident, just the living man. Here there may be no moral implication whatever, as we are well aware; but it is important to realize, when we come to the meaning of the expression as we find it now employed in that part of Romans upon which we have entered, the original force, upon which the moral one is based. The man in the flesh is in this sense the living, natural man, who has never yet known the death of Christ for sinners, and is, therefore, but identified with the old creation and the flesh; as the Lord says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Flesh is all that he is. Spirit and soul are hidden, as it were, in this, from which they now take their character. Their life is in the world of sense, in the old creation; there is no real outlook beyond. "When we were in the flesh" applies thus solely to those not in Christ; and the effect of law upon such is what is here described. It is true that there is a mingled experience between this and the proper Christian one, which is presently shown us, and which must be carefully distinguished from either; but for the proper understanding of this mixed condition we must realize the two conditions apart, which are thus mingled. No Christian can be in that state of which it is said that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But it is just the misery of these that the Christian heart and the unchristian experience are seemingly joined together, although not without a certain modification of one by the other. Of this we shall have presently to speak; but as yet it is not considered, but the two opposite conditions are put in sharpest contrast, so that we may learn them aright. "When we were in the flesh" and "fruit unto death" mark the first of these, that of the natural man; whereas the soul in the experience of bondage,

4 (7-11): Experience under test of law.

4. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not [r]known sin except through law: for I had not been conscious of lust, except the law had said, [s]Thou shalt not lust; but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, [t]wrought in me all manner of lust. For [u]apart from law sin is dead; and *I* was alive apart from law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I* died; and the commandment which was unto [v]life was found for me in fact to be unto death: for sin, taking occasion through the commandment, [w]deceived me, and through it slew me.

r cf. ch.3.20. *cf.* ch. 5.13.
s Ex. 20. 17. *cf.* Matt. 5. 28.
t ver. 5. *cf.* Jas.1.14, 15.
*u cf.*1Cor.15. 56. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-6. *cf.*Lk.18.18 -23.
v cf. Lev.18. 5. *cf.*Gal.3.21.
w cf. Heb. 3. 13; *cf.* Eph. 4. 22.

soon to be before us, can yet say of the sin from which he has not found deliverance, "It is no more I that do it," and "I consent unto the law that it is good."

The Christian condition is now put in contrast with that of the natural man: "but now we are set free from the law, having died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter."

As already said, it is not the law that is dead, but we: but death having come in on either side cancels the tie. That was to the man in the flesh, but the man in the flesh is gone; we are dead in the death of Christ, and so in the flesh no longer. Hagar the bondwoman, as the apostle says elsewhere, is the law that gendereth to bondage, and we are set free to enjoy a true and blessed freedom. The law is the ministration of death, and we died in that in which we were held; but thus we found Christ who has died, and under the curse of the law, so that we are set free in a new resurrection life,—still to serve, for Christ our Lord has served and still serves—would we be set free from that?—nay, but to serve in newness of spirit, serving in joy of soul, and no more in the old drudgery yet superficiality of the letter, pressed from the outside upon unwilling hearts.

This closes the doctrine of the deliverance; which we cannot, however, fully learn save in the experience of it as practically wrought out in the soul. For this, therefore, we go back of the deliverance to realize the state out of which we are delivered.

4. The apostle carefully leads us on step by step. After the doctrine we have the experience which illustrates and enforces the doctrine. This also is first given us in brief, and then we have the exercises which spring out of the experience, and which make us to realize its meaning and importance. The law of sin in the members is then finally seen as the insurmountable barrier to man which shuts him off from the attainment of the holiness which divine grace has taught every one born of God to long for; and then, as in a moment, the groan of self-despair is cut short by the shout of victory; that which he seeks for is attained, though in a manner how different from his expectation; the law of the Spirit has delivered him from the law of sin and death.

With the experience indeed, questions begin at once in the soul, which press for an answer. What means this strange, perpetual connection between sin and law? "Is the law sin?" This connection is not now that of a doctrine, about which one might go astray; it is a fact of consciousness far too manifest to be denied or evaded; but the attitude of the one towards the other is equally unmistakable. Law is the detective under divine government, continually searching out and manifesting it in the light of infinite and omniscient holiness. How startling a revelation as to man, that to provoke lust in him, God has only to forbid it! Sin in its essential character is rebellion against God! Sin takes occasion by the commandment itself to awake all manner of lust against it. And who is not conscious of this tremendous fact that there is a pleasure in sin just as sin—in one's own will and way, as that? And think of God having forbidden, not merely a step in the direction of my own will as against His, but even

5 (12-20): Exercises springing from the experience.
1 (12, 13): the divine purpose of law.

5. [1] So that the law is [x]holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? Far be the thought. But sin, that it might [y]appear sin, working death to me by that which is good; that sin might through the commandment become exceeding sinful.

x *cf.* Ps.19.7-11. *cf.* Matt. 5. 17-20. *cf.* Is.42.21.
y *cf.*ch. 4.15.

a desire to take that step! How entirely this last commandment of the ten removes the question of true righteousness from being that of the outward life simply, and makes it impossible to think of any righteousness on our part fit for Him! What a new light it throws upon the words, "The man that doeth these things shall live in them"! Yet how simple it is, that a heart set upon that which is not in the will of God for me is moral distance from Him to that extent: for God's will is never arbitrary merely, but is the expression of His nature; His way may be in the sea, and hidden from me, but it is always in the sanctuary too.

If, then, there be in me one bit of self-seeking, how must this inexorable, all-embracing law search it out and awake it into vehement life! No wonder that the apostle says that "without law sin is dead!" This is its efficacy, in fact, while it may seem, when we are seeking help from it, its impotence rather (its impotence is indeed one element of its power), that under its rule sin revives, and we die. It is the ministration of death, though on its face proposing life: what is avowedly for life, is found (and invariably found) to be unto death. And behind all this, though at present quite unseen, divine love and wisdom work; so that death itself is really a "ministration"—the death of self-confidence, and so of self-occupation also, that Christ may in result be all in all.

Meanwhile, sin is but discovered by the law, as roused and having strength given to it by the commandment. It should be quite plain that the apostle is not speaking of his present experience in all this, for we shall find him go far beyond it. His "I was alive without the law once," looks certainly like what was personal to himself, although, of course, it would in fact be the experience of others also, or there would be little use in recalling it. In all the rest that we have here, the "I" is evidently merely illustrative. It is a pronoun significant enough in its constant repetition through all this part, while Christ and the Spirit are not mentioned. The language of self-occupation cannot be mistaken, and it is only God's mercy when in such a condition there is little else to speak of but sin and misery. Good self is a worse adversary to Christ than bad self; and it is a good thing if, when with our backs to the sun, self becomes but a shadow darkening all we look upon. Law is as we have seen, in its place of service here, and if honestly listened to, the service it will do is excellent. It is a teacher, however, whose work is to make itself unnecessary, and like the plow to which we may compare it, when once the precious seed has taken root and is growing up to harvest, its use would be as disastrous as before it was beneficial.

5. But we have now to look at the exercises and reasonings incident to such a transitional stage as we cannot but here recognize. It is, as we see, the experience of a soul converted truly to God (for no other could say truthfully what is here said), but as yet unconscious of God's way of power and sanctification; taking up the law in all sincerity to work out holiness by it with God's help, as before it had sought to work out peace and justification. The necessary result is that self-occupation which the law entails upon all under it. The end sought, whatever the plea of holiness, is necessarily self-satisfaction, if in the most plausible form, and that is the element which spoils as holiness everything into which it enters. Pride was the form in which sin entered first among the angels, where there could be as yet no temptation from without; and it seems the only conceivable way of failure and apostasy under such conditions. Ezekiel describes it in words which, while openly addressed to the king of Tyre, picture surely no mere earthly king. There is but one who could fit this description,

2 (14–17): not I, but sin in me. to which I am in bondage.

14 For we know that the law is [z]spiritual; but *I* am carnal, [a]sold under sin. 15 For that which I really* do, I do not [b]approve: for that which I would I do not; but what I hate, this I practise. 16 Now, if I practise what I would not, I [c]consent unto the law, that it is right. 17 Now then it is [d]no more I that really* do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

z *cf.* Matt.5. 21, 22, etc. *cf.*Gal.5.14.
a *cf.* Is.50.1. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 20, 25. *ctr.*1 Cor.6. 19.
b *cf.* ver. 19.
c ver. 22. *cf.*Gal.5.17. *cf.* Ps 119. 97.
d ver. 20. *cf.* ch. 6. 6.

* κατεργάζομαι—one word. It suggests the actual result, what is really accomplished.

and he the prince of all potentates in a world which has rejected the true Prince. Here then is the description:—

"Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore will I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground." . . . (Ezek. xxviii. 12–17).

How unutterably solemn is such a fall! and how deeply instructive for us, with whom Satan's attempt is constantly to animate us with the same spirit, while God's desire and design cannot but be as earnest to "hide pride from man" (Job xxxiii. 17). "Ye shall be as God," was the first temptation, the success of which has left its poison in the depths of our being. Take the apostle as a pregnant example, whose very exaltation to the third heaven, instead of quenching for ever any remainder of such a spirit, necessitated, as he himself has told us, a thorn for him in the flesh, lest he should find in it the incitement to a spiritual exaltation! (2 Cor. xii. 7). What a demonstration for us all of the existence of the flesh still in the most advanced Christians, and of the way in which pride may come into the holiest things! The work of the Spirit is certainly not to comfort us in any self-satisfaction,—too perilous a thing at the best! yet it is here that even the necessity of self-judgment will be urged to keep us occupied with that which true self-judgment would make us turn away from altogether! but to our next:—

[1] Once again the apostle emphatically affirms the holiness of the law, and more: the law is not only holy: the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. What is the great principle upon which it insists, but love? "Love," he says elsewhere, "is the fulfilment (or full measure) of the law" (chap. xiii. 10). In the very giving of the law, disastrous to men as its first consequences may be, love reigns; the law itself is the handmaid of grace. Yet to a soul in the confusion which we find here, at cross purposes with God, and unable to see the end to which it is approaching, this goodness of the law seems only itself confusion in view of the death-sentence which it has brought in. "Did then that which is good," he asks, "become death unto me?" But conscience answers at once, No, the goodness of the law only makes the character of sin the more manifest and more hateful. The law is right in issuing these commands, against which the evil in me thus rebels. They only establish the authority of Him who only has authority. This spirit of rebellion is against Him who is all that that word "God" implies; and if it be in me, He is right in laying it bare, as well as in the condemnation of it.

[2] A further consequence:—I am in contradiction to myself; I am, spite of myself, in bondage to the evil. We know—all Christians do—that the law is

3 (18-20): the flesh unveiled.

[3] For I am conscious that in me (that is, in my flesh) [e]good doth not dwell: for to [f]will is present with me, but to work out the right is not. For the good that I would I do not practise, but the evil that I would not, this I do. Now if that which I would not, this I practise, it is no more I that really * work it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

e *cf.* Ps.51.5. *cf.* Jer.17.9. *cf.* Jno. 3.6.

f ver. 22. *cf.* Gal.5.17.

6 (21-23): Fettered by a law of sin.

6. I find then the law with me, that [g]when I would

g *ctr.* Ps. 40. 8, 9.

* *κατεργάζομαι*—one word. (See previous note.)

spiritual; but I—he cannot say "we" there; it is an exceptional state in him, and terrible in its exceptionality—"*I* am carnal, sold under sin." The bondage is clear, in that he cannot sanction, but hates, the very things he practises. He wishes to do the thing he cannot do; but his efforts only make apparent the fetters with which he is bound. His heart and will consent to the law that it is right. Mournful as his condition is, yet he himself, he affirms, is not the real worker of the evil. He is in the grasp of that from which he cannot escape, but yet can separate himself, and which he personifies, to enable him to separate himself the more clearly from it; a horrible, false self which fetters and oppresses what is now through grace his true self. It is evident that here is the converted man, conscious of what divine grace has wrought in him, and not doubting that he has right to disclaim and cast from him what nevertheless dwells in and masters him. It is a question of power all through, and not of peace:—that is never raised. To raise it is to introduce what confuses the whole; for if peace with God is not yet known by him who is going through this conflict, then it is impossible not to draw the conclusion that, for one who has peace, no such experience is possible: which is against the abundant witness of many who are passing through it.

It will be said that the possession of peace will necessarily modify the experience, and there is no doubt that the experience as we have it here must, in any case, be modified. It is given us, as it were, in downright black and white, without shading. No one exactly and always does what he does not approve, but the absolute way in which this is given helps us better to understand the condition; but to introduce the question of peace with God does not merely modify the experience, but alters the whole character of it. As it is plain, the apostle never raises that question here. It is simply power which he has not, and a bondage to the evil which perplexes and harasses him when he would see fruit of his life for God.

[3] The result is the manifestation of what Scripture calls "the flesh." The meaning of the term, as already said, is not difficult to comprehend. The man in the flesh is, as to his higher part, his spirit and soul, immersed, as it were, in the body. He lives a sense-life in the world around him, not drawing his motives from eternity or from the presence of God, which, in fact, he does not recognize. The man before us is not thus. God, and what is pleasing to Him, has become for him the question of his life; but the flesh itself is not, as we see, removed by this. He has not merely to struggle with it, but is rather captive to it, until he has found the secret of deliverance. He is seeking this at present in a wrong way. He is seeking in himself a better state, in which he can find satisfaction. He puts it, of course, as a question of holiness. Does not God require holiness? Must he not produce it for Him then? God suffers him to be met with this impracticable body of sin over which he is not really master and cannot be. In the flesh good does not dwell. To will is present with him; to work out the right, is not. The good that he would he does not practise. The evil that he would not, that he does. He repeats this over again as the distress that weighs upon him, and his own personal abhorrence of it, and right to reject it as not himself.

6. This, then, ends the experience. There is nothing more to be said about it.

7 (24-viii.4): Deliverance fully reached.
1 (24-25): of God in Christ.
2 (25-viii.1): the way out of bondage.

practise the right, evil is present with me. For I [h]delight in the law of God according to the inner man; but I behold [i]another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and making me captive to the law of sin which is in my members.

7. [1] O [j]wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I [k]thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[2] So then, with the [l]mind I myself am bondservant to the law of God, but with the [m]flesh to the law of sin.

h *cf.* Ps. 119. 35. *cf.* ver. 25.
i *cf.* ch. 8. 7.
j *cf.* Ex. 14. 3, 12. *cf.* Job 14. 4.
k ch. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.
l *cf.* ver. 22. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
m vers. 18, 21. *cf.* ch. 8. 7.

It is simply summed up in the words that close this part. There is a law of sin in the members. We must carefully distinguish this from the presence of sin itself. Sin remains in us as Christians. We have always to watch, always to guard against it, but a *law* of sin is a very different matter. A law of sin sets sin in authority and that is surely a wholly unchristian state, although Christians have to pass through it in order to find the freedom which is proper to them. "I delight," he says, "in the law of God according to the inner man, but I behold another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which is in my members." That ends the whole matter. Deliver himself he cannot. Find strength for this from God, still he cannot. He must come to that point in which he cries out to Another, and deliverance is really found in a way which no man could ever think out for himself or realize, except as taught of God.

7. [1] It closes then with a groan, the groan of absolute despair as to one's self. It is not, "How shall *I*?" any more, but, "*Who* shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Immediately thereupon the answer comes: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is the first time that that blessed Name comes into the whole experience. Experience it is still, but of the power of a Deliverer. There is no explanation, however, further. A great mistake has been made by interpreters generally in supposing that the verse that follows describes, in fact, the delivered man, whereas, upon the face of it there is no deliverance. It is a man in bondage and not a free man who is described there. But, in order to find the deliverance, we must ignore entirely the divisions of the chapters and take in the first verses of the eighth chapter, which, in the common version and in the minds of most, are cut off entirely from it. Thus, the deliverance and the bondage are strangely confused. A man who is bondservant to the law of God, that law which gendereth to bondage, is taken to be the man who is consciously dead to the law by the body of Christ and over whom it has no more dominion; and the man who, with the flesh still serves the law of sin, is taken again to be the one who is free from it! The law of sin is that which the law of the Spirit delivers from. There is *no* "law" of sin when the law of the Spirit has thus delivered. Thus it is plain that on neither side does the last verse of the chapter describe the freeman. It is a going back, rather, to the old experience, in order that now there may be the full explanation of the way of deliverance. That has not yet been given. To say that Christ is the Deliverer does not describe the deliverance, and it would be indeed a poor conclusion, after all the misery of this experience that we have been through, to find absolutely no account of the way out.

[2] The last verse, therefore, is still the bondage. The man distinguishes indeed himself from himself, but we have seen that he was able to do that before this. That, in fact, is not a deliverance. He is still, as he says, a bondservant in both respects, as to the law and as to sin. The answer comes in the assurance which immediately follows now, that, "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That may seem to lead us back to the question of justification, but there is more than that here. Justification may be indeed the basis, as it is of necessity all through, but the law which delivers

There is therefore now no [n]condemnation to those [o]in Christ Jesus.*

[3] For the [p]law of the Spirit, of [q]life in Christ Jesus, hath set me [r]free from the law of sin and of death.

[4] For what the law [s]could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in [t]like-

3 (2): realized through the Spirit.

4 (3, 4): a practical result impossible under law.

n *cf.* Jno. 5. 24. *cf.* ch. 4. 8. vers. 33,34. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 17.

o *cf.* ch. 5. 18. *cf.* ch. 6. 11. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4. *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 20.

p *ctr.* ch. 7. 21, 22, 25.

r *cf.* ch. 7. 24; *cf.* Gal. 6. 2; *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 17; *cf.* Gal. 4. 6, 7.

q *cf.* ch. 5. 10; *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 11, 12.

s *cf.* Heb. 7. 18; *cf.* ch. 7. 10–14.

t *cf.* Jno. 1. 14; *cf.* Phil. 2. 7, 8; *cf.* Heb. 2. 17; *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.

*The last part of the verse in the common version is rejected by the editors. It follows at the close of verse 4, in its true connection.

him is found in the principle developed for us in the sixth chapter, as already stated, the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus. "In Christ" means identification with Christ, and it is manifest that when a soul is able to identify himself in a full, practical way, with the Christ who is before God for him, he is at once out of the condition which has just made him utter the groan of despair. If he can find his true self in Christ, *Christ* is not in the bondage; there is in Him no body of sin, no sin at all, much less a law of it, and he is in Him before God. That may not seem at first to settle the difficulty. If it be a question of power, it is still the man down here who has to possess this power, but in the state of self-occupation in which one under the law necessarily is, there can be no possession of power. In the vain attempt to find complacency in a spiritual condition of his own, his eyes are really off Christ, and, as we have said, he sees but his own shadow. God allows this, in order that Christ may be indeed a constant necessity to him and that he may cease to think of himself, good self or bad self, to rejoice in the One who is made all things to him. Thus we shall find in what follows, that there is this singular result. In the conflict which still may be, as we find it in the eighth chapter, the adversaries are no longer one self to another self, but the Spirit to the flesh. Strange it may seem that the flesh remains while the very one of whom he speaks as himself, through this experience which has just been recited, now, nevertheless, drops out entirely. It is not self at war with self any more. The self that would have gained the battle is really out of the battle. It is the Spirit who leads, and who alone *can* lead in the path of victory, and where we have the Spirit, it is of necessity Christ who is before the soul, and not self in any wise.

[3] The words of the second verse have, I doubt not, been also read without their due emphasis. It is not simply "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free," it is not "the *law* of the Spirit of life." but there is the clear statement now of what the law of the Spirit, that is, the ruling principle which has come to displace the law of sin, in fact is. The law of the Spirit is that of *life in Christ Jesus.* We reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Our life is only there, in Him. This is not a mere principle of truth embraced. It is a change which enables the Spirit of God now to be freely upon our side. Through all that we have had in the past chapter, the Spirit most evidently has no place in the experience. The Spirit's law is that we are, for power as well as for peace, for holiness as well as for justification, in Christ wholly. Life in Christ Jesus is the answer to the death which the law preached, and I am free to forget myself entirely in Him. This self-forgetfulness the legal man dreads, as being almost the same as unholiness. Are we free to forget ourselves after this manner? But, in fact, self-consciousness is that which spoils every Christian grace. To remember Christ, is of necessity holiness. To identify ourselves with Him as God has identified us, is to give us the highest possible rule of practice, but not merely that; it is to give us also the power which we seek. Christ becomes in it the object before us. We live not to glorify ourselves, but to glorify Him. Here, therefore, we are in full accord with the Spirit, and the result is absolutely sure.

[4] This is explained directly. It was impossible for the law to help us. It

ness of sinful flesh, and [u]for sin, [v]condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness* of the law might be [w]fulfilled in us, who [x]walk not according to flesh, but according to Spirit.

*This is a different word from the usual one for righteousness, and means, the righteousness of life aimed at.

u *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24.
v *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14. *cf.* Jno. 12. 31, 32.
w *cf.* Gal. 5. 14; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 14-19.
x *cf.* Gal. 5. 16-25; *cf.* ch. 14. 17, 18; *cf.* Eph. 2. 10.

was weak through the unconquerable flesh. It required from us that which we could never furnish, and the end in this direction, as we have seen, is simply and rightly the despair of self altogether, but God has effaced self for Another; He has sent His own Son in "the likeness of sinful flesh" as the cross manifests Him, but there for sin, our sin, putting it completely away, while, at the same time condemning it utterly. Sin in the flesh is condemned,—I myself, with all that is in me, my own thoughts, my will, my wisdom, my ways,—in the cross, I see the end of it all, but the end of it in the love which has come in fully for me and which now fulfils in me the righteous requirement of the law when it is no longer simply requirement, but the Spirit of God has filled my heart with the joy of Christ. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." I am free to give myself up to drink in this love which God has shown me and which rests upon me in Christ, in all the fulness of God's delight in Him. I have no cause now to ask: Must not God condemn the evil in me? He *has* condemned it, and I read the condemnation there where I find also Himself for me in a grace which knows no conditions, and which holds me fast, therefore, forever. The Christian walk is not according to the flesh, therefore, but according to the Spirit. Self-occupation is of necessity fleshly. The Spirit of God ignores even Himself to glorify Christ. Thus, we may speak of the Spirit even, in a way which is not spiritual. We may seek in ourselves the fruit of the Spirit, when, after all, we are not in the line of the Spirit's testimony, and therefore not in the path of the Spirit at all. The righteousness which the law required cannot be forgotten in the presence of Christ. I am to walk in His company now, and never part. Self-judgment is, in fact, only possible in His presence; and in His presence it is impossible not to exercise it. We have only to remember the scene which has been given us by the apostle in which we find the Lord girded for service, and the water and the towel in His hands. Has He not said: "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part with Me?" "*With* Me," of course, not "*in* Me." If we are to have part with Him, we must be cleansed indeed, not according to our own thoughts of what cleanness is, but according to His thoughts, and He alone can cleanse us after that fashion. If, on the other hand, the need of cleansing is discovered, I find in it the assurance of my having been thus far not with Him as I should have been. If my eyes are off Him still, other things may attract me. I must get back to Him in order to find deliverance from the power of all else, in the presence of a love which has purchased me for itself and which has the fullest title over me.

Subd. 4.

The principles of a walk in the Spirit are now set before us. As already said, we shall still find the flesh present and in opposition. Conflict there is still, but captivity no more, and even conflict is, if I may say so, no more the normal condition of the Christian in this respect. Enjoying my own things, I find a sphere into which flesh cannot and will not enter. It was not in the third heavens that the apostle needed a thorn for the flesh: it was when he came down out of them. And true it is that we thus find ourselves in conflict, how much I need not say, but the Spirit of God has not set before us, as it were, the duty of conflict with the flesh or with its lusts. We are to "*abstain* from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." That is not the same as warring with them. If we are entangled, if our eyes have been allowed to rest upon something not of God, which has attracted them, then indeed there will be of necessity a strug-

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. viii. 5–27.)
The walk in the Spirit.

1 (5): The governing power.
2 (6-8): The Spirit in contrast with flesh.
3 (9 11): The body dead, but the Spirit life.

1. For they that are according to [y] flesh, mind the things of the flesh, and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
2. For the [z] mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is [a] life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is [b] enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed [c] can be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
3. But [d] ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be

y *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9–11. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Eph. 5. 15–21.
z ch. 6. 21. ver. 13.
a *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12. *cf.* ch. 14. 17. ver. 10.
b *cf.* Eph. 2. 16. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.
c *cf.* Job 14. 4. *cf.* Jer. 13. 23; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
d *cf.* ch. 7. 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.

gle, but the being entangled was not a necessity, and it is a totally different thing to be reckoning oneself dead to sin and to be fighting it. We fight it when we have allowed it, when we have not been reckoning ourselves dead to it. There is, of course, a conflict with sin in the world around, a conflict which the Lord Himself had of necessity, because of what He was, but of which we are not speaking here. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "fighting against sin;" but that, of course, is not the sin in us, it is the sin which characterizes the world around us, the corruption which is in it through lust.

1. The first thing, therefore, that is now put before us is the governing power. "They that are according to flesh, mind the things of the flesh, and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The flesh seeks what is according to its mind, and the Spirit seeks what is according to His mind; but notice now, that these two are two companies. "They that are according to flesh" cannot, of course, be confounded with those that are according to the Spirit. The Spirit is for the Christian the One who has come to possess us in Christ's name and for Him; and in Him we find a power which is not of ourselves, and which leaves us still and all the way through, in conscious weakness. This is a great necessity for us, that the power should be power which is fully available for us and yet which is not our own, for the realization of which we have to lean upon Another. It is when we are weak, then we are strong. The sense of weakness is most helpful to us every way. It not only checks all self-complacent thoughts, but it makes us realize in the strength which is constantly ministered to us, the continual care and love of God. We can promise ourselves nothing even yet as to ourselves, and we need not promise anything. We need only the assurance that the love which holds us fast has all things in its control, and that in Christ there is fulness for us from which we can draw at all times. Thus, as has already been said, the "I myself" has really disappeared. The knowledge of the new man is that Christ is all. Faith does not know itself, and its object is never self.

2. The opposition between the two, the Spirit and the flesh, is now put before us. "The mind of the flesh," not "the carnal mind" as if it were a fleeting condition, but what the flesh is in its character at all times, "is death." "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God"; that is death truly. Death is separation from the source of life, and the flesh is willingly separate. Thus then, it "is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "In the flesh" we find here, therefore, to be a spiritual condition, although it is related to the old creation place out of which we have passed. One who is in Christ cannot be in the flesh. On the other hand, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. How blessed a thing is such peace! At one with God, everything else is at one with us. All things of necessity, therefore, "work together for good to them that love" Him. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

3. But immediately we are assured, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the

that the Spirit of God dwell in you; but [e]if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if [f]Christ be in you, the [g]body indeed is dead on account of sin, but the [h]Spirit is life on account of righteous-

[e] *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 23.
[f] *cf.* Jno. 17. 23.
cf. Eph. 3. 17. [g] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 10. [h] *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16; *cf.* ch. 6. 11; *cf.* ver. 2.

Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." This which has put us in the condition here is not to be looked at as if it were possible to be absent from the child of God. We are immediately warned "if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." There are no Christians that are not Christ's, and here, in fact, we are assured that the Spirit of God is found in all who are such. He is the seal upon those who belong to God.

The word is not found here: we must look for it in Ephesians; but the idea is clearly expressed. A seal is the mark put upon what is one's own, with the idea of inviolability attaching to it. The 144,000 sealed out of all the tribes of Israel in the book of Revelation are a sample of this. They are sealed on their foreheads, and we find afterwards that the Name of the Lamb and of His Father is written there, evidently the effect of the sealing. This Name is their preservative from the power of the locusts in the ninth chapter. "Seals were employed," says Kitto, "not for the purpose of impressing a device on wax, but in place of a sign manual to stamp the name of the owner upon any document to which he determined to fix it." The Lord expressly speaks of the descent of the Spirit upon Himself as His being sealed of God the Father. It was then, we know, that His being the Son was fully declared. The seal was the witness of emphatic approbation. In us it is also the token of sonship. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, but with us there cannot, of course, be the approbation of a condition in us, but rather of Him in whom we are recognized as standing before God. Thus, it is not by sealing that we are made to be in Christ. We must be in Christ in order to be sealed. God could not put His seal upon the least evil, the least taint of sin. We are in Christ, moreover, as the apostle says in the epistle to the Corinthians, by new creation. "If any one be in Christ, it is new creation"; and he adds, as what connects itself with it: "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." As soon as ever the work begins in us, we belong to that new creation which abides in the value of its blessed Head before God; and thus alone could it be said that "old things are passed away." In Ephesians we find also that we are "created in Christ Jesus." Creation speaks of the divine work in us from the very beginning.

It is, however, said that in this case, the "none of His" should be rather "not of Him," which is confessedly the literal rendering; and that this refers to a condition not attained by all in whom divine work has begun. The way in which simple belonging to Christ would be expressed, it is said, would be, "He is not to Him" instead of "of Him"; but in the second chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, we find the same expression exactly where most certainly the whole extent of those belonging to Him is intended to be expressed. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," "those that are *of Him*"; where, amid all the confusion of a day in which profession and reality are inextricably confused for us, the Lord yet unfailingly recognizes His own. Thus, in every way, it is clear that the seal marks out those who are children of God, and that therefore it can be fully said that if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. There is no middle condition, however confused the experience may be, or dull the faith in a child of God.

Let us notice the way in which the Spirit is set before us here. First, it is the Spirit of God that dwells in us. Divine power thus keeps us for Him; but next, we have the Spirit of Christ, the One who glorifies Christ and who produces in us also a likeness to Him. Following this, we have, "If Christ be in you"; for the Spirit, in fact, as glorifying Christ, does not testify of Himself. It is not, therefore, the Spirit in you, but Christ in you. This, however, is the ex-

ness. But if the Spirit of him who [i]raised up Jesus from among the dead dwelleth in you, he who raised up Christ from among the dead shall also [j]quicken your mortal bodies on account of* his Spirit who [k]dwelleth in you.

*MS. evidence almost equally favors "through;" but critical authority decides in general for "on account of."

[i] *cf.* Acts 2. 24, 32, 33.
[j] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 51-54. *cf.* ver. 23. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14.
[k] *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19.

pression of life itself, as we have already seen abundantly in the Gospel of John. The Lord's parable of the vine and the branches conveys to us fully the relation between one in Christ and Christ in him. The branch is in the vine; as a consequence, the sap is in the branch. The sap is the life derived from the vine stock. So here, "Christ in you" is the expression of life; but then to this the Spirit alone gives its proper energy. We have already seen this fully in the experience of the seventh chapter, where, although life in fact is, yet it is not in its proper power. Thus, it is said here, that the *Spirit* is life. As we have seen all the way through here, the "I myself," as it were, drops out. It is the Spirit who is the governing power, the Leader; and the attitude of faith is that of entire dependence upon Him.

"If Christ be in you," then, the apostle says, "the body still is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." The body has not yet the effect of redemption manifested in it. It is not yet quickened. Quickening is to come. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit who dwelleth in you." That is the redemption for which we wait. In the meanwhile, the body is to be reckoned simply as an instrument in the hands of the spiritual man. If it manifests its individual life that will be seen, and so the apostle speaks directly of our mortifying the deeds of the body. Not that the body and the flesh are the same thing: the flesh may include, as we have seen, spirit and soul, the whole man; and moreover, necessarily describes an evil condition. The body is not in itself evil, and spite of the condition in which it is yet found, it is in the body that the Spirit of God dwells. (See 1 Cor. vi. 19.) Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. We see fully how the work of Christ enables thus the taking up of that in which there is not yet the power of redemption. This will reflect again upon the experience that we have had in the previous chapter. If the Spirit can dwell in a body that is dead and that clearly through the work of Christ alone, in the same way the Spirit can dwell surely in one who is not yet in the mind of the Spirit, who needs to be delivered from the power of evil, the law of sin in his members. But "the body is dead on account of sin, while the Spirit is life on account of righteousness,"—evidently the righteousness which the Spirit produces. Nothing but that which is righteous before God could possibly be counted "life." We go on to the coming of Christ for the deliverance: "He who raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit who dwelleth in you." The pledge has been given us in Christ's own resurrection. Notice, however, that it is not exactly resurrection as to ourselves that is spoken of. Our "*mortal* bodies" implies a stage of the living and not of the dead, and quickening is that which delivers them from the state of mortality. The reason of this is plain. We are not taught, as people commonly put it, that we must all die. On the contrary, our proper state is to be waiting for the Lord. Thus here, the quickening of the mortal body refers distinctly to those who shall be living when He comes, and for them the Spirit who already dwells in the body, makes good His title to it in the most absolute way. The Spirit is, as we see all through, the earnest of that which is to come. Here then, is the complete answer to the question: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Complete deliverance is what we wait for and yet that does not in the least imply any necessity of sin in the present

4 (12-14): The practical test of the sons of God.

4. So then, brethren, we are [l]debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh: for [m]if ye live according to flesh, ye are on the way to die; but if by the Spirit ye [n]mortify the deeds of the body,* ye shall live. For as many as are [o]led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

5 (15 17): The way with God and the end in view.

5. For ye have not received a spirit of [p]bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of [q]adoption,

* Some MSS. and many "fathers" have "flesh."

l *cf.* ch. 6. 2. *cf.* ch. 13.14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 1.
m *cf.* ch. 6. 16, 21. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* Eph. 5. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 5. 19-21.
n *cf.* Col. 3. 5-10. *cf.* Gal. 5. 24. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4.
1-3. o *cf.* Gal. 5. 18, 25; *cf.* Ex. 13. 21, 22. p *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12; *cf.* Gal. 4. 21-31; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 18; *cf.* Ex. 14. 30, 31. q *cf.* Gal. 3. 26; *cf.* Eph. 1. 5.

time. The presence of the Spirit in us is, of course, fulness of power over it, and the delivered man who is in the power of the Spirit works out the *righteousness* of the law. Whatever we may have to say with regard to ourselves, in fact, we have ever the responsibility of walking in the power of the Spirit, and therefore, as those free from the power of sin.

4. The practical test is now found here again. As we have seen, it is freedom that tests, not bondage. The slave does his master's will; the freeman does his own; and yet even in the state of bondage which has been described to us, the will of the converted man is testified to be for God and good. Freedom is the only thing that is needed by him. The heart to serve God and to please Him he already has. Thus, amongst the professing people of God, freedom, as already said, is the test of reality. There is a way of life and a way of death. The gospel does not alter that, but, on the contrary confirms it. "So, then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, for if ye live according to the flesh, ye are on the way to die." That is spoken absolutely: we have no need to qualify it in the least. If a man lives "according to the flesh," it does not say, "acts" at a given time, but if he *lives*, if that is the tenor of his life, "according to the flesh," then he is on the road to death. On the other hand, if a man has the Spirit, by the Spirit he mortifies the deeds of the body. The body is held for dead. It is used and can be fully used for God. There is not the least thought of asceticism in the apostle's language here. God has no pleasure in a man's ill-treating his body. On the contrary, it is meant to be maintained in vigor for the Lord who owns it, and yet it is to be the mere dead instrument, so to speak, of Another's will. "If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." There is no other way. That marks out, as alone this can mark out, the sons of God.

But, notice the beautiful difference between what is said here upon the one side and upon the other. If men live according to the flesh, they are on the way to death. It does not say that they will die. God's grace is always free to come in, but then if it comes in it takes one off the road to death; it does not speak in such a manner as if sin were of no consequence. On the other hand, if, by the Spirit, you mortify the deeds of the body, not, you are on the *way to* life, because there is no uncertainty about the result, but "you *shall* live." Of course, the full and final result is intended there. We live at the present time and we shall go on to live forever. Thus then, the sons of God are marked out. We are called to enforce the condition which the apostle has made so absolute, whatever we may speak of grace or of faith,—and we cannot enforce these too absolutely when we are speaking of them,—yet, on the other hand, we must be just as absolute as to the way of life and the way of death. We have no right, whatever the profession may be, to consider any one as a son of God whose life does not mark him out as devoted to God.

5. But then the spirit of all this has to be carefully kept in mind. What the apostle has said might tend to produce a spirit of bondage—the fear of the result, of the issue, in unestablished souls,—but he says: "Ye have *not* received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Legality is not at all what is implied here,

whereby we cry, [r]Abba, Father. The Spirit* itself [s]beareth witness with our spirit that we are children† of God; and if children, then [t]heirs; heirs of God and [u]joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we [v]suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified with [him].

*The word for Spirit is in Greek neuter, which accounts for the pronoun being neuter. In John xvi. 8, the pronoun and participle referring to the Spirit are both masculine. It might well be "Himself" here.
†"Children" here, not "sons" the usual word in Paul's Epistles.

r *cf.* Gal. 4. 1-7. *cf.* Mk. 14. 36.
s *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 7, 8. *cf.* ch. 5. 5.
t *cf.* Gal. 3. 29. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4.
u *cf.* Jno. 17. 22. *cf.* Eph. 2. 5-8.
v ch. 5. 3; *cf.* Eph. 3. 10-13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.

and it does not and cannot produce the holiness which it claims and seeks; nor can it secure for itself the final result. Take our Lord's words, for instance, in proof of this. "Whosoever will save His life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." There is the condition, the marking out, as here, of the way of life and the way of death. But it is not simply, whosoever will lose his life shall save it, but "whosoever will lose his life *for My sake.*" Clearly that is not the legal principle. As long as a man doubts his final security, he will, of necessity, be working for himself, but that is not "for My sake." The legal gospel, whatever spice of legality may come into it, is so far unholy, and can be nothing but unholy. We live as Christians, not to ourselves, but "to Him who died for us and rose again"; but there is a religious way of living to one's self which is just as fully that as any course of sin and self-indulgence. Thus here, therefore, we are expressly told that there is no spirit of fear for the Christian, but, on the other hand, we have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba, Father." It is the heart renewed and realizing the power of the grace of God which "teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." The witness of the Spirit with our spirit, therefore, is dwelt upon here. A double witness; there is the witness of our own spirit, and that is implied here in the first place. The spirit of man is that which makes him an intelligent being. "No one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him." Here, therefore, the testimony of the Word, as understood and received is that which is really implied. The apostle has been in the fullest way unfolding to us this testimony, and we are not left merely, as it were, to reasoning out things; we are not left merely to our own intelligence in the matter; nor even simply to faith. We need that which is more powerful than this, and we have it in that witness of the Spirit with our spirit, which indeed, we may be little able to distinguish from the witness produced by faith in the gospel, but which gives divine power to this witness. The witness of the Spirit in this way produces a full consciousness of what God is to us, while, at the same time it is founded and must be founded upon the word of God itself. We must have the Word in proof, or we are entitled to nothing. The Spirit of God acts from and with the Word, never sets it aside, and therefore whatever "feeling" there may be, as people are accustomed to say, all this can be questioned. If it is not justified by the word of God itself, it will not do to talk of the witness of the Spirit. The two, therefore, come together, the Spirit of God and our spirit. Faith receives God's testimony in the Word, and the Spirit of God joins to this a divine power which otherwise it would not have. We cry, "Abba, Father"; we serve with the joyful consciousness that we serve as children,—the most absolute service that can possibly be; for the Father has entire claim to His child; but at the same time where there is, as in this case there must of necessity be, the true affection of children, the service is itself liberty.

Thus then, the Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God; but immense consequences follow. If children, we are heirs. As with regard to God, this might be even thought to be out of place. We inherit from our parents that which is left us when they pass away; but God never passes away. How are we to be His heirs? Only He, Himself, could have inspired such a thought as

6 (18-25): Travail-time now.

6. For I reckon that the [w]sufferings of this present time are not worthy [to be compared with] the glory about to be revealed to us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [x]waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to [y]vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the [z]creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the [a]liberty

w *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16-18. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
x ver. 22.
y *cf.* Gen. 3. 17, 18.
z *cf.* Ps. 98. 4 9. *cf.* Is. 35. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 55. 12, 13.
a *cf.* Gal. 4. 26; *cf.* Rev. 21. 24-26; *cf.* Rev. 22. 1, 2 with Ezek. 47. 1-12.

this. If we want to realize what it means, we have a beautiful example of it in the case of Israel, whose land is expressly claimed to be God's land. They are to be pilgrims and sojourners with Him, thus put into possession on His part, to hold that which is nevertheless His. How perfect the security that is given in this way to their possession of it! When they shall hold it after this manner, how impossible for them to lose it again, and even now the land being God's renders it absolutely impossible that any failure on their part can disturb His purposes with regard to it. *They* might forfeit it. If it were left to them, they surely would, altogether; but God cannot forfeit it, and if He puts them in possession of that which is His own, then they have an unfailing right to that possession. So with regard to our higher and more wonderful inheritance. We are heirs of God. The things that He has created, He has not created for Himself. He has no need of them. His whole heart goes with the gift of them to His people, yet so that in the sense in which we have spoken, the things inherited remain always God's, while we possess and enjoy them fully. There is another thing added here. We are joint heirs with Christ. How wonderfully does this certify to us the extent of the inheritance! Christ is the heir of all things, and to be joint heirs with Christ gives, as one may say, the thought of a limitless inheritance; but not merely so, it assures us of the perfect way in which Christ abides still and ever the Man Christ Jesus. He means to associate us with Himself for ever. The joy of the inheritance will be the joy of being associated with Christ in it.

But then immediately there comes in what may seem to be a condition; "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." Suffering then is necessary to glory, but surely not in any sense as a legal condition,—the suffering with *Him*, not mere suffering in itself, but suffering with Him, suffering as He suffered in the world which was contrary to Him entirely, suffering because of the knowledge of God and joy in Him which were His ever, in view of evil and all its consequences: this, on our part, is the necessary training for that association with Him, of which our being joint heirs speaks. We are preparing to have fully His mind, learning in the midst of evil, learning what evil is in its full character even in ourselves, as we have already seen. In ourselves we are brought into the closest possible connection with it, surely that we may realize forever its nature, that we may hate it as God hates it, and that we may be fully competent to walk with Him who has solved in His own person the whole question of good and evil, and who is the glorious Conqueror over sin by suffering. Thus then, our present lives have a meaning with reference to the future which we must never lose sight of. The suffering by the way is part of our very need, in order that we may be fit for the coming glory. But, as already said, we must not think of this as mere suffering, but, as with Christ Himself, that which was most truly such to Him sprang out of the very joy that He had in God (we are not speaking of atonement now, or that which was necessary for it),—so for us, suffering must have this character. It must put us ever in fellowship with Him in order to be of any value.

6. Immediately upon this, the apostle goes on to speak more at large of the character of the present time for us. It is a time of travail. Creation itself is groaning in the bondage of corruption. It waits for liberty. It waits for the

of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation* [b]groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only so, but we ourselves even, who have the [c]firstfruits of the Spirit, [d]groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption—the [e]redemption of our body. For we have been saved in [f]hope, but hope beheld is not hope; for what any one beholdeth, why hopeth he for it? but if we hope for what we behold not, then do we with [g]patience wait for it.

* The words "creature" and "creation" in this section are the same in the original.

b *cf.* Jer. 9. 10. *cf.* Jer. 23. 10.
c *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 22. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13, 14.
d *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 2–9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 31, 32.
e *cf.* Eph. 4. 30. *cf.* Phil. 3. 21.
f *cf.* ch. 5. 2, 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 3.
g *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 3; *cf.* Jas. 5. 7.

manifestation of the sons of God. Connected with man as its head, the fall of man has brought about this groaning condition. Notice that in himself man is a microcosm. He has the soul of the beast. He has the very dust of the earth in him. He is linked in the fullest possible way with creation throughout, and how blessed it is to realize that in this way Christ, in taking humanity, has linked Himself even, one may say, with the very material universe. How this assures us that it cannot lie under the condition which the fall has produced. There is yet to be a liberty for it. The liberty of grace it could not enjoy, but the liberty of the glory it shall enjoy.

The typical character which we find everywhere in nature connects itself with all this. It is a remarkable thing that even before man was upon the earth, death seems to have reigned in it, and that this for the lower creation is in no wise (chronologically) the effect of the fall. Man was created in a world which, so to speak, prophesied of that fall itself and was prepared for him by the goodness of God in view of it. Thus, if you look at nature, you will find not a condition such as we would imagine. Strife and evil (not moral evil, surely) are in every part of it; and thus alone could it present to man the lessons which he needs, but of which, alas, he is so little heedful. The witness of Christ in creation comes in in this connection. God has given us, in the most abundant way thus, a testimony of nature itself, which does not leave out His purposes of grace, but, on the contrary, bears fullest witness to them. Natural theology has been, alas, but too much divorced from this. Nature has been supposed simply to bear witness in the characters of design which are everywhere in it, of a Maker, a Creator. A Saviour has been supposed to be what lies beyond its testimony; but thus it has been made, if one may so say, more pagan than Christian. How could God Himself be rightly expressed in it, if Christ be not expressed? But this, as already said, involves the very evil and strife which we find in it. God has in all this, wrought for us, and nature is linked with us in its present groanings, as it will by and by be linked with us also in its redemption.

"For we, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption," that is, the full manifestation of what we are as sons of God, now hidden. That involves the body being glorified. We wait, therefore, for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body. The firstfruits of the Spirit would seem to imply that after all what we possess in this way is but a pledge in anticipation of that which is to come, and we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, on that very account, are made to groan. The hope we have of a condition so different from the present makes us only the more groan over the present. Our salvation is in hope, as to the full character of it. Of course, there is a salvation of which we can say already that God *hath* saved us. If it be a question simply of guilt and condemnation, then we are already completely saved; but salvation is very commonly looked at in a very different way from this, and it implies deliverance of the body itself and the fulfilment of all God's purposes as to us. We are saved now in hope, but then

7 (26, 27): Complete provision by the Spirit's help to our infirmities.

7. And in like manner the Spirit also joineth help to our [h]infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh [i]intercession [for us]* with groanings that cannot be uttered; but he who [j]searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

h *cf.* Heb. 4. 15, 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.
i *cf.* Jude 20. *cf.* Eph. 6. 18.
j *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 4, 5. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 11.

* Many omit.

that means that we have not got before us that which we hope for. If we behold it, how can we still hope for it? "If we hope for what we behold not, then do we with patience wait for it." How beautiful a thought it is that this hope is so perfect, there is such complete assurance with regard to it, that the not having it only produces patience in us,—not doubt, but patience! All human hopes may possibly disappoint, but the hope which God has given us is as sure as if we already possessed it. We wait with patience, and the patience itself is holy discipline for us. We wait upon His will, but all that He can give us in the way of assurance is already ours.

7. We have now finally, in this part, the Spirit Himself entering into this groaning condition. The Spirit joins His help to our infirmity. In such a condition of trial and sorrow, our weakness is made fully evident, but that only opens to us more the heart of God and produces in us a healthful dependence upon Him every step of the way. Notice, therefore, that in connection with the Spirit helping our infirmities, prayer is that upon which the apostle dwells. Prayer is the expression of dependence. It is the expression of the creature-place which we have with God. It is the expression, also, if it be that which can rightly be called prayer, of our confidence in God. Prayer is thus, as one may say, a large part of the Christian life, or rather, it is that which links itself with every part of it. If the Lord, in the sermon on the mount, would give us a special example of righteousness Godward, He illustrates this by prayer; but the very prayer itself manifests our infirmity. We do not know even what to pray for as we ought. How blessed to know that here we have a divine Intercessor; as we have Christ before God for us, so we have the Spirit of God in us, and He makes intercession for us according to God. The prayer that He makes is, of course, absolutely according to God; yet as wrought in our hearts it may be on that very account simply a groaning which cannot be uttered intelligibly,—a wonderful thing to realize that these groanings which are the evidence of our own infirmity may, nevertheless, be the fruit of the Spirit within us; that in the ear of God they may speak intelligently, and in absolute accordance with His mind concerning us. We do not know what to pray for, and yet we pray; and God who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, little as we may know it and blunder as we may. "He maketh intercession for the saints according to God." That does not mean simply that it is God's will that He should make the intercession, as our common version might lead some to suppose, but that the intercession itself, as being His, is of necessity in complete accordance with His thought and character. We are not, however, to suppose by all this, that the Spirit's prayer is simply groaning. The groaning accompanies the prayer and is part of the prayer. "With groanings that cannot be uttered." Nevertheless, these groanings express, as it were, after all, that which is higher in character, it may be, than the very prayers themselves, however intelligent. Our intelligence fails to accompany them. They go beyond it. But if they go beyond it, all the more they express the power of the Spirit in them—of Him who has come to join His help to our infirmities, and to carry us along the lighted road which leads to God.

SUBD. 5.

The apostle concludes here with the assurance of the result for us of being

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. viii. 28–39.)

The weak with the Strong.

1 (28–30): Called according to purpose in the First-born.

1. AND we know that to those who love God [k] all things work together for good, to those who are called according to purpose. For whom he [l] foreknew he also [m] foreordained [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be a [n] Firstborn among many brethren; and whom he foreordained, these he also [o] called; and whom he called, these he also [p] justified; and whom he justified, these he also [q] glorified.

k cf. Phil. 1. 12–14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 17.
l cf. 1 Pet. 1. 2.
m cf. Eph. 1. 5, 11.
n cf. Col. 1. 15. *cf.* Rev. 1. 5. *cf.* Heb. 1. 6. *ctr.* Jno. 3. 16.
o cf. Gal. 1. 15.
p ch. 5. 1, etc.
q cf. Eph. 2. 6; *cf.* Col. 3. 4; *cf.* Is. 46. 10.

thus with God, the weak with the strong. His purpose is being carried out in us and with us, and who shall gainsay it? Thus with the boldness which is simply that of faith, he can challenge everything, the whole universe, to disappoint this purpose.

1. The purpose itself is put clearly before us. Christ is of necessity in the forefront of it, and thus its justification, and the full assurance that it will be carried out. "We know that to those who love God all things work together for good, to those who are the called according to purpose." The present is linked with the future in a most absolute way. From God's foreknowledge of us in the past eternity to the accomplished glory of the future, there is a perfectly linked chain of blessing, no link of which can ever be sundered. God's purpose is that Christ His Son, should be a First-born among many brethren. How blessed to see the grace which is necessarily manifested when Christ is thus in the forefront! It is not here, therefore, the "Only-Begotten," of whom the apostle speaks. The Son is that; but He is here in human guise, a "First-born," which implies others, and that is clearly expressed. He is found thus with those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. God's purpose, therefore, includes, of necessity, these. If it failed as to the brethren, it would fail as to the Son of His love. They are bound up together in His thoughts.

We have, therefore, strong words here, words that are often somewhat too strong for the faith of His people. "Whom He foreknew, He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." If Christ is, on the one hand, the image of God Himself, (and He alone can be that in the reality of all that is implied,) yet we are to be conformed to His image. That is God's purpose as to us. He could not surely be without a purpose, and having the purpose, He could not be without the power of carrying this through. What comfort would there be for us in the midst of such a world as this, if it were not so? if God had not a purpose, or if He had one which could be set aside by man's self-will? How blessed, when we know Himself, when we realize that His will is but the expression of His perfect nature, how blessed then to see His will in all its sovereignty! We may be sure, too, that He will respect all the powers with which He has endued His creatures. He will do violence to nothing, but while this is surely so, He will carry out in the most absolute way every part of His purpose. This is definitely asserted here. "Whom He foreordained, these He also called; whom He called, He justified; whom He justified, He glorified." It is remarkable here that there is one thing left out which we should expect perhaps to have a foremost place. After justification, we are accustomed to say, comes sanctification, but where is sanctification here? We are indeed to be conformed to the image of His Son, and that, one may say, implies it fully; but in the chain of blessing which we are looking at now, sanctification seems, surely purposely, to be omitted; for it is just here that, alas, we perplex ourselves with all sorts of questions. We make of a condition, a doubt; and the legality natural to us will seek to intrude at any possible point; but between justification and glory here, there is absolutely no room left for it to come in.

Notice that we begin with fore-knowledge. None surely can deny this to Him.

2 (31-39): What can be against us?

2. What shall we say then to these things? If God be [r]for us, who [shall be] against us? He who [s]spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us [t]all things? Who shall [u]lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who [v]justifieth: who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ* who [w]died, yea, rather, who was [x]raised up, who is at the [y]right hand of God, who also maketh [z]intercession for us: who shall [a]separate

r cf. Ps. 118. 6. ctr. Ezek. 5. 8.
s cf. Gen. 22. 2. cf. Jno. 3. 16.
t cf. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23. ver. 17.
u cf. Ex. 11. 7. cf. Num. 23. 8, 20, 23.
v ch. 4. 5. cf. Zech. 3. 1-5.
w ch. 5. 6.

* Some early MSS. add "Jesus."

x ch. 4. 25. y Heb. 1. 3. z Heb. 7. 25. a cf. Jno. 10. 28; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

He could not create, plainly, not knowing the future of what He was creating. If He foreknew, then He could not possibly be without a will with regard to the future of that which He had created. Fore-ordination follows, therefore, fore-knowledge. He will have things to be according to His own mind. From this, our calling follows, which is here, of course, not the general call of the gospel, not a call that can be refused at all, but on the other hand, the creative call, as God says by the prophet: "I call them, they stand up together"; and, as we see here, those who are called are justified. No one drops out. Justification follows the call. Identified as it is, and as we have seen, with the life which follows this, if one is called in this way to spiritual life, justification can never be apart from this. We are justified from the first moment, with the first breath that we draw of true life from God. Then notice that "glorified" seems to be put in the past, just as much as "justified." It is the style of the prophets,—everything contemplated from God's side, and, therefore, although in fact to be accomplished, yet seen as if it were already so. If God calls that which is not as if it were, its existence is by that absolutely pledged. This then is the purpose, and already He has said that, "All things work together for good," let us remember, according to that purpose. If we have anything else before our eyes, it is no wonder that we question very much how things are working for good to us. If we fail to keep in mind that which is present to God, we fail to understand what He is doing; for the fulfilment of His purpose, not one thing necessary can possibly be absent.

2. Naturally, if this be so, the challenge with which the apostle closes is yet, after all, simple: "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us?" What He has already done is the assurance that He will leave nothing undone. He has not spared His Son but delivered Him up for us all. God's holiness has been fully satisfied and God's love has not shrunk from that which is needed to give it satisfaction. If He has not spared His Son, "how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" A limitless blessing there, but what else could rightly measure the love which has given His Son? Then, what can be against this? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" As we see in the prophet, if Satan stands at the right hand of Joshua, clothed in filthy garments, his sins upon him, to resist him, the word which settles all is, God has *chosen* to pluck a brand out of the burning. Certainly it is a brand. Certainly it was just the thing for burning. If God chooses to pluck it out, who shall say Him nay? How completely our sinful condition is passed over in this, or rather, it is made the means only the more of glorifying the grace which comes in for us! If, then, God has His chosen ones, who shall lay anything to their charge? It is God Himself who justifies. Who, then, shall condemn? That is the proper connection of these expressions. God is the only One who has title, in fact, to justify. He will do it, of course, according to absolute righteousness, nay, as this epistle has shown us, His very righteousness is displayed in doing it, and in heaven those that are in Christ will thus be made "the righteousness of God in Him." But just on this very account, the thing is sure. "Who shall condemn when God is He who

us from the love of Christ? shall [b]tribulation, or [c]anguish, or [d]persecution, or [e]famine, or [f]nakedness, or [g]peril, or [h]sword? as it is [i]written, For thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we have been counted as sheep for slaughter. But [j]in all these things we [k]more than conquer, through him who [l]loved us. For I am [m]persuaded that neither [n]death nor [o]life, nor [p]angels, nor [q]principalities, nor things [r]present, nor things to [s]come, nor powers, nor [t]height, nor [u]depth, nor any [v]other creature, shall be able to [w]separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

b cf. Acts 14. 22. *c cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4. *d cf.* Acts 13. 50–52. *e cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 11–13. *f cf.* Acts 16. 22. *g cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 25, 26, etc. *h* Heb. 11. 37. *cf.* Acts 12. 2. *i* Ps. 44. 22. *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9. *j cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7–10. *k cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14. *l cf.* Jno. 16. 33. *m cf.* Phil. 1. 20. *n cf.* ch. 14. 7–9. *o cf.* Deut. 8. 2–4. *p cf.* Gal. 1. 8. *q cf.* Eph. 6. 12. *r cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 26. *s cf.* Ps. 112. 7. *t cf.* Eph. 4. 8–10. *u cf.* Matt. 16. 18. *v ctr.* ch. 1. 24, 25. *w cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 12; *cf.* Jno. 13. 1.

justifies?" Then "it is Christ who died, yea, rather, who was raised up and who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession (in the place of power) for us." Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? The question speaks for itself. Put as a question, it is put in the strongest form. It is a challenge, as already said, that whoever or whatever can do this be produced. Yet there are many things that seem against us. So then, "tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?" can these? Nay, that was written and true of God's saints of old; of them it was written: "For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long, we have been counted as sheep for slaughter." Can we separate these suffering ones from Him for whose sake they suffer? Nay, in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. "Conquer" by itself is too little to express it. We *more* than conquer; conquer in result, conquer in the endurance of the very sufferings which cannot prevail unless to bless and brighten us. Christ, though He may seem absent, is superintending it all in a love which mixes the whole cup for us, and every ingredient is blessing.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature:"—all these things are creatures. A promiscuous looking assemblage it may be, but he wants to sum up everything that could possibly be thought of. Nothing, then, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which in Christ Jesus our Lord has found a perfect title for its expression, and which in Him, as we look at Him, has found already perfect expression. Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, already shows us God with man in the fullest possible and absolutely unchangeable blessing.

Div. 3.

The grace of the gospel has now been carried to its issue in glory. The doctrine of the epistle is so far concluded; but we have yet to see the bearing of all this upon Israel and the special promises given to her of God. The sin of man at large and of Israel, we may say especially, has been fully proved. "There is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" but that does not affect at all the question of the faithfulness of God to His own Word. Let man be what he may; if God has spoken, He will surely fulfil what He has promised, and here we have to remember that the promise to Abraham was a very different one from the conditional one of law. The promise to Abraham was indeed not directly to the nation at all, and therefore the standing or fall of the nation could not affect it. It was absolute grace in its nature, and as we see in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, if trial and suffering, if the furnace were needed as well as the lamp, the covenant included both, in order to work out the purpose of God. When law came in, it was exceptional entirely, as the apostle says, "It came in by the way," and for the purpose, not of putting Israel's title to the inheritance upon a new foundation, but really in order to

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ix.–xi.)

Israel's special promises, how and when to be fulfilled.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. ix.)

The election of Grace.

1 (1-13): The children of promise the true seed.

1. I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great [x]sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart: for I have [y]wished, I myself, to be anathema from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; whose are the [z]adoption, and

[x] *cf.* ch. 10.1.
[y] *cf.* Ex. 32. 32.
[z] *cf.* Ex. 4.22. *cf.* Hos. 11.1.

show that nothing but absolute grace could be the foundation of such promises as hers. The law was the ministration of death and condemnation, as we have fully seen, and if the inheritance were of law, as the apostle tells us afterwards, it were no more of promise. Law and promise are in absolute contrast, in contradiction, one may say, to one another. Israel chose the law, and so far, therefore, as she could do it, gave up the grace in which God in fact had been hitherto dealing with her, to accept the recompense of her own desert. She found this in result; and it was seen from the beginning that it would be terribly against her. The new covenant, which still remains to be fulfilled, provides for the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, but to a people who have sinned, and expressly in view of their sins; but it is absolute grace once more. It is all God's "I will," not the legal "Thou shalt." Thus, these unconditional promises must be fulfilled. The prophets fill them out and show us Israel on their conversion as a nation not lost in the midst of the Gentiles, but, on the contrary, the centre of the divine rule for the earth and in special nearness to the divine King. The promises of the Old Testament have nothing to do with heaven, no thought of any one going there. They concern the earth; and here the blessing for the earth of necessity implies the blessing for Israel. Isaiah affirms the eternal perpetuity of their seed and name, not merely for the millennium, but "as the new heavens and the new earth," says God "which I will make, shall remain before Me, so shall her seed and her name remain." Thus Israel's distinct existence, and as it is implied, distinct privilege, remains eternal. There is no escape from this, except into the utter confusion in which so many are, between the earthly people and the heavenly, Israel and the Church. If we will only read Scripture with the simplicity which belongs to it, if we will only allow that God means exactly what He says, there will be no difficulty at all in discerning that Israel's promises abide in spite of all that has come in apparently to set them aside, and (for a time,) in fact has done so.

SUBD. 1.

The first part of that which we find here shows us Israel as the elect of God, but election necessarily means grace. It is God acting in grace from Himself and without claim on man's part. Thus, in the very way in which it is carried out, we may be sure that we shall have the manifestation of this. Man will never be able to use the fact of God's election in order to get credit for himself or to establish a fleshly claim.

1. But, in the first place, before the apostle proceeds to this, he affirms, in the strongest way, his sorrow over and devoted love towards Israel. He had not been behind Moses in his desire, if it were possible, to sacrifice himself for the blessing of the people. "He *had* wished" (it is not as if it were indeed something that could be deliberately entertained or something which was thought possible in itself to be realized) that he himself "were accursed from Christ on account of his brethren, his kindred after the flesh." He does not say: "I

the [a]glory, and the [b]covenants, and the giving of the [c]law, and the [d]service, and the [e]promises; whose are the [f]fathers, and of whom is the Christ, [g]according to the flesh, he who is [h]God over all, blessed throughout the ages. Amen. It is not, however, that the word of God hath come to nought: for they are not [i]all Israel, who are of Israel; neither because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children; but in [j]Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, not they who are the children of the flesh are the children of God, but the children of the [k]promise are counted as the seed. For this word is of promise, [l]According to this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but when [m]Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father

a cf. Ex. 19. 16. cf. Ex. 40. 34. *b* cf. Ex. 19. 5. cf. Ex. 24. 8. *c* Ex. 20. 1, etc. *d* cf. Lev. chs. 1–9. *e* cf. Acts 13. 32. *f* cf. ch. 11. 28. cf. Heb. 11. 2. *g* ch. 1. 3. *h* cf. Jno. 20. 28. cf. Jno. 1. 1. cf. Heb. 1. 8. cf. Col. 1. 16, 17. *i* cf. ch. 2. 28; cf. Jno. 8. 33, 37. *j* Gen. 21. 12; cf. Gal. 4. 23. *k* cf. Gal. 4. 28. *l* Gen. 17. 21; Gen. 18. 10, 14. *m* Gen. 25. 21–23.

could wish." It was simply an uncalculating, unreasoning longing, if you please, for their blessing. It was the agony of a soul beside itself with the thought of their loss of all that God had made their own. He shows us, thereupon, the ground of their endearment to him, a people connected with the whole history of God's dealing with man hitherto. To them, as he says, belong, the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of law and the service of God and the promises. To them belong the fathers, and Christ too, as concerning the flesh, but He is much more than what this implies: He is "over all, God blessed for ever."

Let us look at these separately. First of all we must not confound the adoption of Israel with that which we know in Christianity. It is the peculiar privilege of the Christian dispensation, as we call it, that we both have the adoption, the open acknowledgment that we are sons of God, and the Spirit of adoption to seal and manifest this. Israel had nothing of this kind. Nationally Israel indeed could be called God's son, and, as in relation to the nations of the earth, His first-born, for the blessing of Israel implies the blessing of the nations of the earth also,—the first-born implies the later born. Nevertheless, the character of this is entirely different from Christian adoption. "You only have I known," says the Lord, "of all the families of the earth." They were still a family of the earth and never ceased to be that. Their adoption does not in the least certify the salvation of one single soul among them, nor the spiritual relationship to God on the part of any one. Nationally, they might call God, Father, and He says: "I am a Father to Israel," but the very fact of His saying that implies, as the apostle tells us, that at the time He says it, the true children of God are scattered abroad. God is not owning His children as such. The owning of the nation is in distinct contrast with this. In the time to come, as we know, Israel will be a nation all holy, but up to the time in which the apostle writes, up to the time in which we are now, the condition of the nation has been a very different one from this. The adoption, as we have seen, is an adoption of a family of earth and for earthly privilege and blessing.

Next, we have the glory; and here it is manifest that we have to think of that which dwelt in the midst of them, their peculiar privilege, the presence of God, whether in the tabernacle or in the temple, a presence manifested amongst no other people.

Thirdly, the covenants all belonged to Israel. There was no covenant with the Gentiles, except indeed, that Abraham was to be a blessing finally to all the families of the earth. Indirectly they come in there; but, as expressly made to them, there was no covenant, and with regard to ourselves also, Christians as we are, and in the fulness of a blessing which Israel could know nothing of, the new covenant is still not made with us, but *ministered to* us,—a very

Isaac, (for [the children] being not yet born, nor having done any thing good or bad,* that the [n]purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works,

n cf. ch. 11. 5-7. cf. ch. 8. 29, 30. cf. Eph. 1. 11.

* A few of the most ancient MSS. read "worthless."

different thing. The foundation has been laid, as the Lord refers to it when He institutes His memorial feast. The cup was the cup of the new covenant in His blood. The foundation of all blessing, as we know, was in the cross, and thus if Israel for the time, or, as to the mass of them, have rejected God's grace, the provisions of the covenant can, nevertheless, be ministered far and wide, and that is what we have distinctly in the New Testament. The covenants then belonged to Israel alone.

Then we have the giving of the law; and here the "ten words," as they are called, the ten commandments, are expressly declared to be a covenant with Israel. The lesson of the law was for all, the conviction of human unrighteousness was the conviction of all the world; but the law itself, which was, in fact, one of Israel's covenants, was expressly and exclusively their own.

Next, we have the service, the ritual service which God instituted in Israel. He has never instituted another yet. He has brought us indeed into the place of worshipers and given us the Spirit, that we might worship acceptably and in the nearness which divine grace has given to us; but just on that very account a ritual is *not* that which God has provided for us. We have nothing that answers even to the book of Psalms. The joy with which God has filled our heart and the truth which He has made our own, enable us to use all the assurances of blessing which we find there or elsewhere. We are "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings" in Christ, and therefore we can freely claim as ours anything that can be called a "spiritual blessing." If God says to Joshua: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," the apostle assures us we can claim *that;* although if there were any promise which could be thought of, perhaps, as special to the individual, it would be that. But all spiritual blessings are ours. That does not in the least take them from those to whom they were made. It does not deprive Israel of any part of her inheritance or of her privileges. God simply is the same God to us, only more fully known, and therefore in greater fulness of blessing for us. The greater includes the less, and the blessings spoken of throughout the Old Testament, so far as they are spiritual blessings, are, therefore, fully ours.

We would need a large service book to be able to put them into voice aright, but in fact anything of this kind would be contrary to that which we have as our peculiar blessing, the presence of the Spirit of God amongst us. Are we to put words into His mouth? He is with us, as we have seen, to give full expression to those prayers even, which may be expressed only by a groan, but it is a groan intelligent in the ears of God; but the service of God, the ritual service, was Israel's alone.

Then we have the promises; and these are in the same absolute way claimed for Israel. It is plain, of course, that the Old Testament promises are meant, those which any one in the apostle's time would recognize to be the promises. The Christian ones were still a mystery,—and the apostle shows us what is meant by this, namely, that they were things hidden from ages and generations and now made manifest to the saints. Thus the new covenant itself, as ought to be most plain, if we consider the terms of it, does not and cannot cover the fulness of our blessing. The ministers of Christ are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). What is characteristic of Christianity is just that which is beyond even the new covenant itself,—the opened sanctuary even is not, but it is not here the place to look further.

"The fathers" present to us the venerable forms that we are familiar with in Old Testament history; but Christ, again, as concerning the flesh, belongs to Israel also; that is, He came of them; while at the same time it is carefully

but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The [o] elder shall serve the younger. As it is [p] written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

[o] *cf.* Gen. 27. 29, 37.
[p] *cf.* Mal. 1. 2–5. *cf.* Jer. 49. 7–22; *cf.* Am. 1. 11, 12; *cf.* Obad. 1, etc.

guarded here that there was in Him that which of necessity made His manhood of much deeper significance than could be implied in the fact of His coming of Israel. The title which He constantly uses with regard to Himself in this connection is that of the Son of Man. Israel could have, in this sense, no exclusive title to Him, and, in fact, not even a special title. He is, of course, much more than Man, One over all, "God blessed forever." The distinct force of this has been attempted to be set aside by many, and in different ways, which it does not need to consider here. The words as we have them in our version perfectly express the original, and affirm in the strongest way that Christ is God in the highest sense, the God who is over all. That does not conflict in the slightest with the supreme title of the Father, but assures us that Christ is one with the Father Himself, in the same way, supreme.

All this belongs, says the apostle, to that Israel, his kindred according to the *flesh:* expressly cutting off in this way any spiritual application, so-called, as to the Christian Church. It still belongs to, and cannot be taken from them, notwithstanding their present condition, so long existent. God is strong and patient.

This, then, is the people over whom the apostle mourns, and no wonder. How is it possible for us to forget Israel's claim to the most affectionate remembrance? But if they have failed and, as to the mass, been for the present set aside, the word of God has not failed on that account. "All that are of Israel," says the apostle, "are not" therefore "Israel." A nation in the flesh, there were amongst them (scattered by the system, as already said,) the true children of God; but outside also of Israel were children of God, as we know. To belong to the nation could not deprive any one who sought God, of the blessing of that; and on the other hand, the belonging to Israel could not confer blessing upon those whose backs were really towards Him. But God had taken care expressly to show, in the very history which they had in their hands, that the seed of Abraham were not, as they constantly assumed, the mere seed after the flesh. These were not necessarily the children of Abraham in any proper sense. Thus, the history itself marks out, and from the beginning, that in Isaac the seed shall be called. Ishmael was, as to that, as much a child of Abraham as Isaac, but Ishmael is not reckoned as of the seed, as Isaac is. His being the child of the bondwoman might seem, perhaps, to account for that; therefore we have another case, and a plainer one, which God has taken abundant pains to make plain to us. Jacob, the younger, was in this the one chosen of God, and not Esau. Yet they were both children of Rebecca; according to the flesh they had both an equal title, if indeed the fullest were not Esau's, but here God Himself speaks out in the fullest way. Before the children were born, before anything had been done by either of them, either good or bad, God says: "The elder shall serve the younger." He does not base this upon any conduct of theirs. He simply affirms it to be His will, and thus if Israel will maintain that the seed of Abraham according to the flesh have rights based upon the flesh, they must admit to these rights the Ishmaelites on the one hand and the Edomites on the other; that election is of grace, therefore, that is of God's will alone, is settled by history. But let us remember here that the moment we speak of God's will, it is not merely, as we say, an arbitrary thing. In God's will, His whole nature speaks. You cannot find anywhere the will of God expressed in which you will not find His character expressed also. In fact, where this is manifested in the fullest way, just there we may expect the fullest and sweetest manifestation of what God is. We must never lose sight of this when we speak of the absolute will of God.

God's love is free: when He pleads with His people in Malachi the love He

2 (14-18): God's diverse dealing.

2. What shall we say then? Is there [q]unrighteousness with God? Far be the thought. For he [r]saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is [s]not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who hath mercy. For the [t]scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my [u]power, and that my [v]name might be declared in all the earth. Therefore on whom he willeth he hath mercy, and whom he willeth he [w]hardeneth.

q *cf.* Gen. 18. 25. *cf.* Gen. 15. 16. *cf.* ch. 3. 5, 6.
r Ex. 33. 19.
s *cf.* Deut. 7. 6–8. *cf.* Jas. 1. 18. *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13.
t Ex. 9. 16. *cf.* Acts 13. 22.
u *cf.* Jer. 10. 7. *cf.* Josh. 2. 9, 10.
v *cf.* Ps. 83. 17, 18; *cf.* Josh. 7. 9; *cf.* Neh. 9. 10.
w *cf.* Ex. 4. 21; *cf.* Ex. 7. 13; *cf.* Ex. 8. 15, 32; *cf.* Heb. 3. 13; *cf.* ch. 2. 4, 5; *cf.* Is. 6. 10.

had shown to Jacob, He uses the name which reminds them of the natural character of their father, stamped so upon his descendants also, before divine grace had made him Israel. These names are used according to their different significance, in application to his seed, as one may see conspicuously in Balaam's prophecy. Here it suitably points out how little the "worm Jacob" had merited divine love. On the other hand, if He has to say in contrast, "I hated Esau," He carefully marks the wickedness on their part which had called forth His anger against them. "They shall call them the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord has indignation for ever." This was not, as in the former case, before the children were born, or had done good or evil; and the free love of divine grace has no corresponding free hate, but longsuffering patience toward the creatures He had made. "Esau have I hated" was said at the close of the Old Testament, after long trial extending over many centuries.

2. But here immediately a question is raised by men. Is this righteousness? It was the very question which the law that they had was meant to settle for them and which it does effectually settle, that on man's part *he* has none; that therefore he cannot claim anything from God on that score. If God set him aside wholly from blessing, it is no question of righteousness in God. If we speak of righteousness in that way, we ignore our own condition. The apostle appeals to the history with regard to this. When they made the golden calf at Horeb, all was gone as far as that generation was concerned. God retreats into Himself. He says: "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." It is upon this ground alone that He can take them up again. The Israel of Paul's time owed thus, in fact, their very existence to this compassionate will of God.

The case of Pharaoh is another which men speak of much. God says of Pharaoh: "For this same purpose I have raised thee up, that I might show in thee My power and that My Name might be declared in all the earth." But what does He mean by this? If God is going to declare His Name, for what purpose is it? In fact, when God did thus raise up Pharaoh, the world at large was sunk in idolatry. Pharaoh was the head of the most idolatrous nation, probably, upon the face of the earth. He was also in a place in which that which was done to him, the manifestation of God's sovereign power in his case, would go far and wide amongst the nations. Was there no goodness manifest in that very fact, that "against all the gods of Egypt" He was executing judgment? We find that it did indeed speak, and the song of Israel at the Red Sea shows what was the effect amongst the nations. Not indeed, that they were brought to God by it; not necessarily that any were. Of this we have no knowledge. Yet in the case of Rahab, supplemented, no doubt, by other testimonies, we see how much it wrought. Thus, if God raised up Pharaoh and made him a monument of His judgment, it was mercy, nevertheless, that made him so, and that mercy had been displayed with regard to Pharaoh himself, as it is very easy to see. Nay, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was largely wrought *by the*

3 (19–26): His self-manifestation in all this.

3. Thou wilt [z]say then unto me, Why then doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, [y]who art thou who repliest against God? Shall the thing [z]formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the [a]potter power over the clay out of the same lump to make one vessel unto [b]honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much [c]longsuffering vessels of

x *cf.* Jer. 7. 10.
y *cf.* Job. 33. 13. *cf.* Job. 36. 23. *cf.* Matt. 20. 15.
z *cf.* Is. 29. 16. *cf.* Is. 45. 9, 10. *cf.* Matt. 11. 25–27.
a *cf.* Is. 64. 8.
cf. Jer. 18. 1–12. b *cf.* Prov. 16. 4; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 20; *cf.* Acts 9. 15. c *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 9; *cf.* Prov. 1. 22–32.

very mercy shown him. "Because judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil." But shall not God show mercy then? He does show it, again and again, removing the judgment threatened or brought about in the case of Pharaoh, and when the king finds relief from that which had for the moment terrified him, his heart hardens itself against God. One may say that we are told that it was God who hardened it; certainly not by any putting forth of His power to do this. It was rather the very mercy that was displayed, by which the hardening was effected, and thus God's goodness remains all the way through, whatever might be the effect upon a human heart in opposition to Him.* The sun which melts the ice may harden the clay. It is the same sun that does both. Thus, while it is true that "on whom He will He showeth mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth," and although we may be little able to follow out in detail the mystery of God's ways in this, we are not in the least called to justify Him. The day will come when everything will be fully manifest; and then He will be "justified in judgment and clear when He is judged."

3. We are next told that in all these things, in the judgment, as well as in the grace, God is manifesting Himself. The apostle first of all indeed, rebukes the thought of a man replying against God, whatever God may be pleased to do. Such replying must necessarily be in vain. Could one succeed in establishing his cause against Him, what could it be? It would be the ruin of everything. Think of being able to show that God was not the righteous, holy, gracious God He is! Think of the disaster everywhere which would result from such a thing. The moment we speak of God, we must be still and know that He is God; and the apostle insists upon this in the first place. If He be the potter, He has power over the vessels to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. Who shall deny Him that? How He will use His power is another matter. He never says that He makes vessels to dishonor, but as a mere question of power and wisdom, as merely the question of His Godhead, are we going to dethrone God? As a fact, when the apostle comes to the different character of vessels, he shows us that if God was minded to show His wrath and make His power known, He did it, as in Pharaoh's case, while He "endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." That was exactly Pharaoh's case; but he never says that *God* fitted the vessels for destruction. On the other hand, if He would make known the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, He carefully adds: "Which He had afore prepared for glory."†

* Three expressions are used to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart: "Pharaoh hardened his heart"; "God hardened Pharaoh's heart"; "Pharaoh's heart was hardened." We have in these the responsible person, Pharaoh, steeling his heart against the mercy and judgment of God; then, God's acts of mercy and judgment were His own, and by these, in divine forbearance, the heart of the stubborn king was fully manifested. It was the judicial hardening which can thus be regarded as a divine infliction, as with Israel in Isa. vi. Lastly, the circumstances are looked at as having the effect; the result is simply mentioned.—S. R.

† Similarly, in the judgment of the nations in Matt. xxv., our Lord speaks to those on the right of "the Kingdom prepared for *you* from the foundation of the world," but those on the left He sends to "everlasting fire prepared"—not for them but, "for the devil and his angels." That any are saved is due alone to grace, but men cannot blame God for those who are lost.—S. R.

wrath fitted for destruction, and that he might make known the [d]riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which [e]he had before prepared for glory? [even] us whom he also called, [f]not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? As he [g]saith also in Hosea, I will call that my people which was not my people; and her beloved who was not beloved. And it shall be that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God.

4 (27-29): Mercy for a remnant only declared as to Israel.

4. But [h]Esaias crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the [i]sand of the sea, [it is] the [j]remnant shall be saved: for he is bringing the matter to an [k]end and [cutting it short in righteousness, because]* a cutting short of the matter will [the] Lord effect on the earth. And according as Esaias said before, [l]Unless [the] Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and been even made like to Gomorrha.

d *cf.* Eph. 1. 7, 18. *cf.* Eph. 3. 16. *cf.* Col. 1. 27. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-17.
e *cf.* Gal. 1. 15. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 10. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.
f ch. 3. 29. *cf.* Col. 3. 11.
g Hos. 2. 23. Hos. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 10. *cf.* Is. 54. 1.
h Is. 10. 22, 23. *cf.* Is. 6. 11-13.
i *cf.* Gen. 32. 12. *cf.* Is. 48. 19.
j *cf.* ch. 11. 5. *cf.* Is. 11. 11, 16. *cf.* Joel 2. 32.
k *cf.* Matt. 24. 22.

* Many leave out the bracketed words, which complete the quotation from the Septuagint.

cf. Is. 30. 12, 13; *cf.* Dan. 9. 26, 27. l Is. 1. 9; *cf.* Lam. 3. 22, 23; *cf.* Mal. 3. 6; *cf.* Am. 4. 11.

God's intervention in the one case is as carefully noted as it is positively absent in the other, and this is the character of all His ways; His wrath needs to be made known, and His power. The necessity of that in such a world as is around us ought surely to be manifest. God's judgments thus have a character of mercy which we must never forget in relation to them, but if He comes out in that which most fully expresses His will, as election does, for instance, here we find all His heart conveyed in it. If election be of grace, then grace is that which we must in the fullest way ascribe to God. "We," says the apostle, are a sample of this: "We, whom He hath called not only from amongst the Jews, but also from amongst the Gentiles." We are upon the same ground, and thus it is that the apostle quotes Hosea here in two passages which manifestly apply directly to Israel only: "I will call them My people which were not My people, and her beloved which was not beloved;" and again: "It shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God." Both passages, as I have said, refer to God's purposes with regard to Israel in the time to come, but as a principle they equally show how He is acting and how He has title to act in His present grace. The men of the Gentiles, who were not His people, He is calling His people; and where He had said unto them, "Ye are not My people," there they are now called of Him His children. The apostle does not say that this is an exact fulfilment of Hosea's words. It is a fulfilment in principle, and that is all that is implied in his quotation.

4. Mercy then, in fact, is Israel's only hope, and here everything has been declared already and her own sins by the prophets. Isaiah crieth concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sands of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." It will be a remnant only out of many, and this applies to the time not yet come, when "He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness," when He is making a short work upon the earth. In the fourth chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah has shown us how this will be carried out and how the nation will become at last a holy nation, when "it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have

5 (30–33): Why Israel did not attain.

5. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles who followed [m]not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, but a righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, pursuing after a [n]law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law [of righteousness] *. Wherefore? Because it was not of [o]faith, but as of works.† For they [p]stumbled at the stumblingstone, according as it is [q]written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

* Many omit. † Many add, "of law."

m *cf.* ch. 10. 20. *cf.* Lk. 4. 25–27. *cf.* ch. 15. 21.
n *cf.* ch. 10. 2, 3. *cf.* Phil. 3. 5. *cf.* ch. 3. 20.
o ch. 4. 16. *cf.* Jno. 6. 29.
p *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8. *cf.* Matt. 11. 6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23.
q Is. 28. 16. *cf.* Ps. 118. 22; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7; Matt. 21. 42.

purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." It is the time of which He says again that, "When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"; and this principle applies to Israel also. Judgment must do its work, but in order that at last grace may be able to be manifested. But thus, in contrast with the proud expectation of blessing from God as a whole, a remnant only will remain to enjoy it. The remnant of that time will become the nation for God. He quotes another witness from the same prophet, that "Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like unto Gomorrah." The judgment of the cities of the plain would be their judgment, except divine grace had made a difference.

5. But if there were no escape, except in God's mere mercy, from such an issue as to Israel, a plain reason can be given for the rejection of the many which was now taking place, although it was at that very time that Israel manifested, as we know, their zeal for the law, in a certain sense therefore, for righteousness. How strange a fact that while the Gentiles, largely men who had never followed after righteousness, who were mere sinners of the Gentiles, attained righteousness as believers in Christ, Israel, pursuing after the law of righteousness, did not attain to it; but why? Because it was by law that they sought it, in the way in which there was utter impossibility of ever finding what they sought. This has been shown us already, again and again. They rejected distinctly God's principle of faith, and thus they stumbled at the Stumbling Stone,—Christ in His grace come low enough to be stumbled over, in that humiliation which was the expression of His perfect grace, as well of the need which that grace was to meet. It was the very thing which in their condition became a stumbling block to them, and God had declared that this would be so. He was to place in Zion a "stone of stumbling and rock of offence." The fulness of God's love exhibited in Him could be no other to men filled with the Pharisaic self-righteousness which characterized the nation. They knew not their need and therefore the very goodness which ministered to that need—grace, was rejected because it was grace: the lower it had come to minister to men, the more ground had they in their thought for rejecting it.

SUBD. 2.

The contrast is now drawn between the law and the faith of the gospel. This might seem to have been sufficiently discussed; but the law is so thoroughly according to man's mind, that it is hard indeed to divorce one from it. After all the treatment which is given to it in this epistle we shall find, in that to the Galatians, how the soul even that has learned to rejoice in the grace of the gospel may still go back to what is the entire opposite of this, and we shall have to take up again the question of this opposition there, though from a different point of view to that which we have at present. Yet the very word "salvation," in the sense in which the gospel has made us to know it, is not found in connection with the law; which, at best, puts it on the wicked man to

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. x.)

The contrast between law and the faith of the gospel.

1 (1-4): The righteousness of God ignored by the self-righteous.

1. BRETHREN, the delight of my heart and my [r]supplication to God for them is for salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a [s]zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being [t]ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their [u]own [righteousness,]* have not [v]submitted to the righteousness of God. For [w]Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

2 (5-13): The word of faith and Christ for salvation.

2. For [x]Moses describeth the righteousness which is of law, that the man who hath done these things shall live by them.† But the righteousness which is of faith

* A number omit. † Some read, "by it."

r *cf.* ch. 9. 3. *cf.* Gal. 6. 16.
s *cf.* Acts 21. 20. *cf.* Lk. 18. 21, 22.
t *cf.* Lk. 19. 42. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 6-8. *cf.* ch. 3. 21.
u *cf.* Lk. 18. 11.
v *ctr.* Phil. 3. 7-9. *cf.* Lk. 7. 30. *cf.* 2 Ki. 5. 11-14.
w *cf.* Gal. 3. 23 26. *cf.* Jno. 19. 30 with 2 Cor. 3. 6-14.
x Lev. 18. 5; Gal. 3. 12; *cf.* Lk. 10. 28.

save himself, and that by turning from his wickedness and doing what is lawful and right, a thing which all his past has proved impracticable.

1. Here it is for the salvation of Israel that the apostle longs and prays. He testifies that they have a zeal for God, a thing which reminds us of the terrible fact that there is a way which seemeth right to a man, where yet the end may be the ways of death. This is a thing which men would gladly forget. The open ways of death are many enough, and every one recognizes that men do not get to heaven by drunkenness or violence; but that there should be a way seeming *right* to a man and in following which, therefore, he may be perfectly sincere, yet proving in result to be the way of death, this is indeed a startling matter to face. Let all consider, therefore, that the "broad way which leadeth to destruction, and many they are which go in at it," is not of necessity a way of open wickedness; on the contrary, while sinful self is indeed and necessarily against God, yet righteous self is a more universal and a worse antagonist. The publicans and sinners followed Christ. The Pharisees and religious people could not believe in Him. The apostle reminds us here that the whole effort of the heart characteristically in Israel was to establish their own righteousness, and thus the righteousness of God was ignored. The effort proves that men have not measured themselves in the presence of God. Christ is now proclaimed for righteousness "to every one that believeth," and that is the opposite of law. The law says: "He that doeth"; the gospel says: "He that heareth." "Christ is the end of the law," replacing and setting it aside, and bringing in a totally contrastive principle.

2. The contrast with living by doing is plain. That is not faith, nor is it salvation. For the righteousness of faith, the apostle quotes, however, in what may seem a very strange fashion, Moses too. He puts into his words clearly what is not in Moses; and the language of Deuteronomy the thirtieth, which he uses, unquestionably speaks of the law itself. "This commandment which I command thee this day" could be nothing else but this. It was of this commandment that Moses says: "It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven to bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for it and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Yet, in principle at least, the apostle seems to find the gospel in this. Can it be implied, where not expressed? The beginning of the chapter shows that Moses has been speaking of the time when the predicted blessing and the curse shall have been alike fulfilled, and when, scattered in every land, Israel will return in heart to what was then commanded

speaketh thus: [y]Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into the heavens?—that is, to [z]bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend to the abyss?—that is to [a]bring up Christ from among [the] dead. But what saith it? The word is [b]nigh thee, in thy [c]mouth and in thy [d]heart, (that is, the word of faith which we preach,) that if thou shalt [e]confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt [f]believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from among [the] dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the [g]heart one believeth unto righteousness, and with the [h]mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, [i]Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is [j]no difference as to Jew or Greek: for the same Lord of all is rich unto all who call upon him; for [k]whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved.

ctr. Jas. 2. 14-26; *cf.* ch. 6. 17. *h cf.* Jno. 9. 10-34. *i* ch. 9. 33. *j* ch. 3. 22, 29; *cf.* Eph. 2. 1-4, etc; *cf.* Acts 15. 8, 9. *k* Acts 2. 21. Joel. 2. 32.

y cf. Deut. 30. 11-14 *cf.* Jno. 3. 13.
z cf. Heb. 10. 5-7. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10.
a cf. Jno. 10. 18. *cf.* Acts 2. 24. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 19, 20.
b cf. Lk. 10. 9. *cf.* Mk. 12. 34.
c cf. Lk. 19. 37-40.
d cf. Acts 16. 14.
e Lk. 12. 8.
f cf. Acts 16. 31. *cf.* ch. 4. 24, 25.
g cf. Lk. 8. 15.

them. This explains the words "not in the heavens." The law had been given them in the first place from heaven, God speaking to them thence; and again, "not beyond the sea" refers to their scattered condition far away from their land, and yet with the word in their hands, and now through grace in their hearts also, for through grace it is. When they return in heart to God at that time, God will have compassion on them. They will be no more able to keep the impossible terms of the law than they ever have been, and if God takes them up at the end of their wanderings, it can only be in grace after all, although by that grace itself the law is now written in their hearts. This reminds us at once of the new covenant, for the terms of the new covenant are: "I will write My laws in their hearts"; yet how different is this "I will write" from the legal compact, "thou shalt do" so and so! Thus the light dawns on us. The apostle really makes explicit what is implicit in Moses' words; but then again, for this, Christ must come in. With Moses that is yet a secret thing which at least does not come into the passage quoted, but the apostle puts it in as, in fact, indispensable. There could be no grace apart from Christ. There could be no salvation apart from grace, and we are familiar with the new covenant as that which, of necessity, must have Christ for its fulfilment. When once we see this, we need have no difficulty about what is said here; and for us "Who shall ascend into heaven, and who shall descend to the abyss?" can only refer to Him. It seems strange at first sight that he should put it, "Say ye not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven," and for the purpose named; who ever did say that? No one, assuredly, ever thought of bringing Christ from heaven, as no one ever thought of raising Him from the dead. These are things outside of the range of man's natural expectation, much more of any accomplishment on his part; but this is, nevertheless, what was absolutely needed, and thus the hopelessness of *any* effort on man's part is confessed at once. If we cannot ask, even, Who shall do this? this after all is what has secured salvation for us and nothing else could secure it. Thank God, it is an accomplished thing; and therefore still more, no one could need to ask the question. Only the *word* of it remains, the report which awakens faith and of which faith lays hold. There is simply the word in the mouth and the heart, a word of confession for the mouth, and of faith for the heart. The apostle does not hesitate to put these together. He does not think of the possibility of a faith without confession. He does not own such a thing to be faith. "Faith if it have not works, is dead, being alone." It is, of course, the basis of all, necessarily. One must believe that God has raised Christ from the dead or there will be no confession of Him as the Lord of all, and the apostle joins confession with salvation surely,

3 (14-17): Published abroad.

3. How then shall they [l]call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they [m]believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a [n]preacher? and how shall they preach unless they have been [o]sent? according as it is [p]written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings of peace,*—of those who bring good tidings of good things! But they have not all [q]obeyed the gospel: for [r]Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith is by a [s]report; and the report through the word of God.†

4 (18-21): Israel's unbelief.

4. But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, truly, [t]Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the habitable world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First, [u]Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy through [those who are] not a nation; through a nation without understanding will I anger you. But [v]Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found by those who sought me not; I was made manifest to

l *cf.* Matt. 15. 21-28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2.
m *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Acts 11. 14.
n *cf.* Acts 8. 30, 31. *cf.* Tit. 1. 3.
o *cf.* Lk. 24. 47, 48. *cf.* Acts 13. 2-4. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 4. *cf.* Eph. 4. 11.
p Is. 52. 7. Nah. 1. 15. *cf.* Eph. 6. 15.
q *cf.* Heb. 3. 18, 19. *ctr.* 1 Thes. 2. 13. *cf.* Jno. 5. 44.
r Is. 53. 1. *cf.* Jno. 12. 38.
s *cf.* Acts 10. 36-43. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit "of those who bring good tidings of peace." † Many read "Christ."

cf. 1 Pet. 1. 23; *cf.* Heb. 4. 2. *t* Ps. 19. 4; *cf.* Col. 1. 23; *cf.* Matt. 28. 18, 19; *cf.* Acts 14. 16, 17. *u* Deut. 32. 21; *cf.* ch. 11. 11, 14; *ctr.* 1 Thess. 2. 16 with Matt. 23. 13. *v* Is. 65. 1; *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, etc; *cf.* ch. 9. 30.

as looking on to that time when Christ will confess in His turn those who have confessed Him upon earth. That is the time when salvation will be complete. The calling on Him as to which he quotes from Joel, in the same way as Peter at Pentecost, necessarily implies this. "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." Notice how fully the deity of Christ is recognized here, for "the Lord" in Joel is Jehovah; and notice, too, that by the words of Joel himself the Gentile cannot be excluded. If it be "whosoever believes" and "whosoever confesses," the Gentile, of necessity, may come in here upon the same footing as Israelites themselves.

3. Here then is the gospel. To fulfil its purpose, it must be published, sent out. Here is the wide-spread mission call of Christianity, and of such a call the law knew nothing. It had a special priesthood, but no recognized ministry outside the bounds of Israel itself. That special priesthood proved, in fact, that those who were outwardly nigh were still, as to the mass, far off, and the priesthood themselves, as we know, could not really draw near to God. How little, therefore, was there for a gospel to the world! The exclusive position of Israel, of which Pharisaism boasted so much, was, in fact, the confession that the time was not yet come for the proper revelation of God. God was not yet in the light, the way into the holiest was not manifested. When this takes place, immediately the question is raised which the apostle puts in this epistle: "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" Could He possibly reveal Himself, and yet hide that revelation from any of His creatures? On the contrary, it must now everywhere be pressed that God has drawn near to man, and the claim for answer must be pressed along with it. There is still an obedience requisite, an obedience of faith, without which there can be no blessing; and this comes nearer home to every man than any call under the law could possibly do; for let a man hear the law as he might, it was not the man that *heard*, but the man that *did*, that was accepted. Now, on the other hand, if a man hears, truly hears, he is accepted at once, and thus the question of obedience to such a call is urged at once. There is no reservation of it to a possible future, when he shall have fulfilled impracticable conditions.

4. The apostle goes on now to Israel's rejection. The call had been given

those who inquired not after me. But unto Israel he saith, [w]All the day long have I stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

[w] Is. 65. 2. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37, 38. *cf.* Jno. 12. 35, 36.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. xi.)

How Israel's portion will be made good to them.

1 (1-6): The present election of grace showing God's unchanging purpose.

1. I SAY then, hath God [z]cast away his people? Far be the thought. For [y]*I* also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people whom he [x]foreknew. Know ye not what the [a]Scripture saith in [the history of] Elias? how he pleadeth with God against Israel: Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have dug down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the divine answer to him? I have left to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then, in this [b]present time also, there exists a remnant according to the election of grace. And if it be by [c]grace, it is no longer of works; otherwise [d]grace becomes grace no longer.*

[x] *cf.* Lev. 26. 44, 45. *cf.* Neh. 9. 31. *cf.* Jer. 31. 36, 37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20–26.
[y] Phil. 3. 5.
[z] *cf.* Is. 41. 8–10 with ch. 8. 29.
[a] 1 K. 19. 10, 14, 18.
[b] *cf.* ch. 9. 27. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.
[c] *cf.* Eph. 2. 8. *cf.* Acts 15. 11.
[d] *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 5, 16. *cf.* Gal. 5. 4.

* Some add, "And if of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no more work."

her. The apostle quotes for this the words of the nineteenth psalm. The voice of the heavens in creation, of which it speaks, is that which corresponds to the world-wide call, now that the heavens are indeed speaking; but the prophets had foretold what, in fact, has now taken place. God had said that He would anger Israel by a foolish nation, that is, by an idolatrous one, for this is the thought of "foolish" constantly in the Old Testament. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," or, at any rate, has wandered from the right One. Thus Israel's rejection was not only a present fact, but a fact that had been long before announced. If there was a remnant at all, it was a remnant according to the election of grace.

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We are now to see how Israel's portion is yet to be made good to them. We have seen already, that, in fact, the promises of God must be fulfilled. They are not, if we think of those to Abraham, conditioned upon any response on man's part. God alone is the Speaker in them, and as the apostle tells us in the next epistle (Galatians) the law which was 430 years after could not be added as a condition to what God had already unconditionally declared. Israel's portion is then, yet to be made good to them; but this involves another thing. If the special place and privileges of the nation are to be restored, the *church* subsists only by the breaking down of these very distinctions. In it there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but it is composed of both, united by one Spirit in the body of Christ. Thus, then, the Church must have passed away from the earth before Israel's promises can be fulfilled. The two could not exist together at the same time, and so it is stated in this chapter; as concerning the gospel, with regard to that, Israel, although always beloved for the fathers' sakes, is yet treated nationally as an enemy, and it is not, therefore, by the gospel as it goes out at present, that Israel as a whole can be brought back to God.

1. The apostle dwells first of all upon the fact of this present election of grace as declaring God's unchanged favor towards them. "God," he says, "hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew." That foreknowledge embraced, assuredly, all the history of the people of His choice. He at least could not be disappointed, nor could the evil in them work change in Him. He could cer-

2 (7-10): Blinding of the rest, as written.

2. What then? Israel hath not [e]obtained that which he seeketh after; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded, according as it is [f]written, God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes so as not to see, and ears so as not to hear, unto this day. And [g]David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense unto them; let their eyes be darkened that they see not, and bow down their back alway.

3 (11-15): The fruit of their fall and restoration.

3. I say then, Have they stumbled that they might [h]fall? Far be the thought; on the contrary, [i]by their fall salvation [is come] to the Gentiles, to provoke them to [j]jealousy. And if their fall be the [k]riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, [l]how much more their fulness? For I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am [m]apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my service; if by any means I may [n]provoke to jealousy [those who are] my flesh, and may save some out of

e ch.9.31. *cf.* Lk.18.9-14.
f Is. 29. 10. *cf.* Is. 6. 10 with Acts 13. 41.
g Ps. 69. 22, 23. *cf.* Ps. 35.4-8. *cf.* Deut.29. 22-28.
h *cf.* Hos. 1. 10, 11. *cf.* Jer. 31. 28.
i *cf.* Acts 13 27. *cf.* Acts 28. 26 28.
j ch. 10. 19.
k *cf.* Lev.23. 22. *cf.* Mk.12.9. *cf.* Acts 18. 6. *cf.* Gen. 45 5-8.
l *cf.* Is. 49. 6; *cf.* Is. 60. 3, etc; *cf.* Ps. 72. 8-11. m Acts 9. 15. ch. 15. 16; Gal. 1. 16; Gal. 2. 7-10.
n *cf.* Num. 12. 1; *cf.* ch. 10. 19.

tainly never be deceived. The heart of man, which man indeed is incompetent to fathom, He Himself claims to know perfectly. If there is a remnant preserved among them at all, it is an election of grace, and therefore independent of works, as the apostle says here,—of works of any kind. Grace, he adds, becomes grace no longer if works are mingled with it. Through all their history, even at the time of most complete national apostasy, still, as he reminds us here, there was ever a remnant. Elias, even, could make intercession to God, alas, *against* Israel. "Lord," he says, "they have killed Thy prophets and digged down Thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life"; but it was a mistake in every way. God had still reserved to Himself, as He says, 7,000 men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. That was His work, and therefore no power of the enemy could overthrow it. The remnant in Israel is, according to the prophet, the sap of the tree, which, though the tree be cut down, shows nevertheless that there is life in it. If there were no sap, there would be no life; but as long, therefore, as there is a remnant according to the election of grace, Israel still in that sense lives before God.

2. Blindness in part, however, has happened to them. That which Israel sought for, they have not obtained. We have already seen that the most zealous seekers were apparently those farthest from fulfilling the conditions of successful search. "The election hath obtained it," says the apostle, "and the rest were blinded." They have fallen under the judicial sentence of God, as again their prophets witnessed. God had given them such eyes as did not see, and such ears as did not hear.

3. They had stumbled confessedly over the Stumbling Stone. They had not eyes for Christ. They saw "no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him." They had stumbled, but not that they might utterly fall, as is plain from the fact that the salvation of the Gentiles was in order to provoke *them* to jealousy. God still then was expecting from them what His own grace alone could produce. But then, if such consequences and blessings were the result of their fall, would not their fulness, when it should take place, be for still greater blessing to men at large? If their casting away nationally resulted in the message of reconciliation going out to the world, will not their being received back again be life from the dead? This, as we know, in fact, has been abundantly promised. There is no blessing for the earth apart from the blessing of Israel. There could be no fulfilment of the prophecies of that time of the earth's bless-

them. For if the [o] casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall their reception be but [p] life from among the dead?

4 (16–21): The mercy to the Gentiles testing them also.

4. Now if the [q] firstfruit be holy, so is the lump; and if the root be holy, so also are the branches. Now if [r] some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a [s] wild olive-tree, wast grafted in among them, and becamest a [t] jointpartaker of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, [u] boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, it is not [v] thou bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; through [w] unbelief they were broken off, and thou [x] standest through faith: be not [y] high-minded, but fear, if indeed God hath not [z] spared the natural branches, lest he also spare not thee.*

* R. V. reads "for if God spared not . . . neither will He spare thee."

o ver. 11.
p *cf.* Ezek. 37. 1–14. *cf.* Is. 26. 16–19. *cf.* Hos. 6. 1–3. *cf.* Ruth 4. 15, 16.
q *cf.* Is. 51. 1–3. *ctr.* Matt. 3. 9.
r ver. 25. *cf.* Is. 6. 10–13. *cf.* Jer. 39. 9, 10.
s *cf.* Eph. 2. 11, 12. *cf.* Gal. 2. 15.
t *cf.* Acts 11. 1–18. *cf.* Acts 15. 14–18. *cf.* Eph. 3. 6–11.
u *cf.* ch. 3. 27–30; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–31; *cf.* Ob. 10–12.
v *cf.* Gen. 12. 3; *cf.* Gal. 3. 14.
w *cf.* Heb. 3. 19; *cf.* Jno. 12. 35–50.
x *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 24; *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 1–13.
y *cf.* Heb. 4. 1–13; Prov. 28. 14.
z *cf.* Lk. 19. 41–44; *cf.* Is. 5. 5–7.

ing without Israel being in the centre of it, as every picture shows. Of course, if, for Israel in the prophet we are content to read the Church, then everything will be changed indeed, but God's word, read in the simplicity of its ample statement, cannot possibly allow of this.

4. The present mercy to the Gentiles is, however, (and that of necessity,) the testing of these also. The witness of what man is must surely go on throughout the ages as man himself goes through them. Solemn it is to realize this in the case of Christianity, with all its fulness of blessing. Men are willing enough to forget what Scripture, however, so thoroughly assures us of. In Paul's day, the mystery of iniquity was at work; and this was to go on to its end in an apostasy out of which the man of sin, to be destroyed at the coming of Christ Himself, will arise. Grace indeed reigns in the gospel; but if we argue that this means that it is to conquer the world, this is directly denied by Scripture itself. "Let favor (or grace) be shown to the wicked," says Isaiah, "yet will he not learn uprightness." "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." It is that which we find in Judges with regard to Israel, the King must come. Nothing will do but the coming of the King; and this not because of the power of the enemy simply, for the power of God is with His people and there can be no failure there, but because of the wickedness and failure of God's people themselves.

The apostle in the type of the olive ignores all that is distinctive of Christianity and speaks of the Gentiles as simply grafted into the place of Israel's broken off branches. These parables from nature are never pictures of grace in its fulness. In the tree, we have ever considered the responsibility for fruit; so with the vine, whether we look back to the prophet's application of this to Israel herself, or in the Lord's application of it to Christian profession now. The vine above all, perhaps, speaks of the necessity of fruit; it is of no use except for fruit; but here we find that there are branches also which are broken off, and in the Old Testament prophet, the vine itself is laid waste and trampled down.

The fig-tree planted in the vineyard now desolate as such, refers to the remnant returned from Babylon in Ezra's and Nehemiah's time; but here again the Lord takes up that figure, in order to show God's expectation of fruit from it, and how, when Christ Himself came, there was still none. Sentence was ready to go forth: "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Still His own in-

5 (22–29): The governmental ways of God.

5. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: upon those that fell, [a]severity; but upon thee [b]goodness of God,* if thou abide in his goodness; [c]otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they [d]abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is [e]able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of the olive-tree that is wild by nature, and hast been grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree how much more shall these who are [f]according to nature, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of [g]this mystery, lest ye should be wise

a *cf.* Num. 14. 34. *cf.* Deut. 28. 63.
b *cf.* Acts 13. 47, 48. *cf.* Acts 14. 27.
c *cf.* Jno. 15. 2. *cf.* Col. 1. 23. *cf.* Rev. 3. 16.
d *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 16. *cf.* Jer. 3. 21–25. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
e *cf.* Jer. 31.
g *ctr.* Eph.

* Many omit "of God."

10–14; *cf.* Ps. 126. 1–3; *cf.* Jer. 32. 15–17, 27, 37. *f cf.* Jer. 33. 25, 26; *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 2. 3. 3–6; *ctr.* Matt. 13. 11; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 51; *ctr.* Rev. 17. 5; *ctr.* 1 Tim. 3. 16.

tercession causes it to be spared for a while yet. It is digged about and dunged; and now, if it will bring forth fruit, well; but, as we know, this was fulfilled when the Spirit of God came down amongst men at Pentecost, and still there was no answer from the people of that day.

The olive again speaks naturally of that in which the Spirit is found, for the oil, as we know, is the type of the Spirit; but the same element of responsibility is found in it. What is looked for may not be there in fact. The branches are broken off for lack of a faith which they never had, and one may partake of the fatness of the olive-tree and yet not have this. The Spirit's work, in a sense, is implied, but not, as we see, of necessity, any *inward* work. If the apostle speaks of the lump being holy as the firstfruit was, he is referring to Abraham as set apart to God, and Israel had the same setting apart, but it was not *necessarily* more than external. The branches and the root are similar.

The root again was Abraham, and it is clear that in Abraham you have, in fact, the first separation to God out of the world that history furnishes. The nations had now gone off into idolatry, gone fully away from God, although we might find exceptionally a Melchisedec amongst them. Out of that general corruption, God separates Abraham to Himself, and thus begins a new principle upon the earth. Israel manifest still God's principle, however little they realize the spiritual character of it in His thought; however little they might be indeed separate from the mass of the nations round about them.

God acting indeed in His grace in this way has made Israel to be, as it were, the very tree itself into which the Gentiles have now been grafted. Here the New Testament speaks with the Old. As the vessel of the Spirit, who can deny Israel's special place? Paul himself, the very apostle of the Gentiles, was, nevertheless, not a Gentile, as he puts it here, in the sense in which he is speaking. The Gentile is a wild graft, which, therefore, if grafted into the olive is "contrary to nature." It is, as we know, contrary to nature to graft that which is wild upon the good. Faith is required now, and the branches are broken off, therefore, because they do not answer to this. They are not competent to meet the claim which Christianity makes upon them, and they are broken off from their own olive-tree. Thus, if God be pleased to graft Israel back again, we need not be surprised. The Gentile cannot possibly claim, according to this, to have any necessary right in it, much less to be the whole thing, as he is apt to claim. Israel is only blinded in part until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.

5. There is a limit to the present blinding; there is a limit to the time of blinding altogether. When, in God's mind, the complete number of the Gentiles is brought in, Israel will, as a whole, be saved; not, as the apostle says here, by the gospel, but by the Deliverer coming, not now out of *Bethlehem*, as once He came, to be rejected; but out of *Zion*. He does not come as the Babe born to the nation any more, but as the King and Conqueror, and then it is

in your own conceits, that [h]blindness in part is come to pass to Israel, until the [i]fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so [j]all Israel shall be saved; as it is [k]written, The Deliverer shall come out of Zion; he* shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant on my part for them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are [l]enemies for your sakes; but as concerning the election, beloved for the [m]fathers' sakes: for the gracious gifts and calling of God are [n]without repentance.

h vers. 7-10.
i *ctr.* Lk.21. 24. *cf.* 2 Pet.3.9.
j *ctr.* ver. 5. *cf.* Ezek.37. 11,12,15-28. *cf.* Ezek. chs. 40-48. *cf.* Is.11.11-16.
k Is. 59. 20, 21. *cf.* Lev. 26. 44, 45.
l *cf.* Hos. 1. 6-9. ver. 12.

* Some read, "And he."

m ch. 9. 5; *cf.* Deut. 7. 8; *cf.* Ex. 2. 24; *cf.* Dan. 9. 15-19. n *cf.* Nu. 23. 19-24; *cf.* Mal. 3. 6.

when "Every eye" sees Him. "They also who pierced Him" shall see him, and the outburst of confession on the part of the people will be the beginning of their national blessing. Enemies indeed they now are, that is, treated by God as enemies; which does not, of course, refer simply to the enmity in their heart, but that God *treats* them for what they are, enemies, as to the gospel,—while it goes out, though still the gifts and calling of God abide for them unchangeable.

For us there is a solemn consideration here. How fully that which is characteristically Gentile Christianity has come in the minds of the vast number to be considered the whole thing, scarcely needs to be insisted on. Israel are to be saved, no doubt, but simply by the extension of the blessings of the gospel to them. Christians are that spiritual Israel, which is to bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit. Thus the Gentiles have become, in spite of the apostle's warning against it, "wise in their own conceits." They have indeed thought that they bore the root, rather than the root them, and ignored the conditional footing upon which we, in common with Israel, as the professing people of God, stand. But the apostle brings it out fully here. "Behold, then," he says, "the goodness and severity of God: upon those that fell, severity, but toward thee goodness, *if thou continue in His goodness*, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Now *have* we—could we venture to say we have—continued in God's goodness? Who will say so? Why then do we hear so much of revival, and the need of revival, except because of the constant tendency to decline? But is it a tendency only? What does the very Reformation, which we rejoice over so much, bear witness as to the general condition of Christendom at the time in which this took place? What was that of the Romanism out of which the Protestant churches through the mercy of God emerged? Out of Rome, what could we say of the Greek and eastern churches, which God allowed to be smitten with the rod of Mohammedanism for their idolatrous abominations? To come closer home, what shall we say of the condition of the Protestant churches themselves since God broke the papal chain, and set them free? What of Unitarianism, Rationalism, and the hundreds of sects and heresies, which are the unanswerable reproach and witness against them? What are we sliding into now, which allows Romanism to-day to boast herself, however foolishly and falsely, as being the preserver of Scripture? Alas, we have not continued in God's goodness; and thus the sentence of excision is clearly upon us, "thou also shalt be cut off."

Thus when, according to Isaiah, the light shall arise again upon Israel, it will not be merely to add new splendor to a day already bathing with its brightness the nations of the earth, but on the contrary, as he—most unaccountably according to the dreams men are indulging in—most plainly says, when "*darkness* shall cover the earth, *gross* darkness the nations" (chap. lx. 1–3). The Gentile church is become apostate, as Paul elsewhere shows (2 Thess. ii. 3–12), the true saints having been removed to heaven. How important to realize the times in which we are, and what is before us, that we do not go with the mass in the

6 (30-36): His victory over sin.

6. For as ye indeed [o]once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy [p]through their disobedience, so also have these now disobeyed the mercy to you, that they also may become objects of [q]mercy. For God hath [r]shut up all together in unbelief, that he might show mercy unto all. O the [s]depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how [t]unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For [u]who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor? or who hath [v]first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him? For [w]of him, and through him, and for him are all things, to whom be [x]glory throughout the ages. Amen.

o Eph. 2. 2. Tit. 3. 3.
p ver. 11, etc.
q *cf.* Is. 53. *cf.* Mi.7.18 20. *cf.*Zech.12. 10.
r ch. 3. 9,19. *cf.*Gal.3.22.
s *cf.* Is. 12. *cf.* Is. 25. 1, etc.
t *cf.* Job 11. 7–10. *cf.* Job 33. 13. *cf.*Ps.77.19.
u 1 Cor.2.16. *cf.* Is.40.12-14. *v cf.* Job 41. 11; *cf.* Ps. 50. 9–12; *cf.* 1 Chr. 29. 11–14. *w cf.* Heb. 2. 10; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 3 with 1 Cor. 15. 28. *x* 1 Tim. 1. 17. etc.

smooth ways in which they are prophesying to themselves peace, but walk in separation to God from all that is bringing in the end in judgment!

6. But the victory over sin is thus, after all, God's alone. Israel's unbelief has been the occasion of His mercy to the Gentiles in this very way; through the impossibility of any claim on their part any more to the privileges that were theirs, they become objects of mercy merely. They had refused God's mercy when it went out to the Gentiles. They are to be blessed finally as themselves mere Gentiles, having no claim beyond that. Thus, they are brought upon the common ground in which alone blessing can be found for any man. God could not bless them in self-righteousness it is clear; and He must in all His ways show that man throughout is a debtor to mercy alone. This is the occasion for the apostle's adoring recognition of the "riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." The plan is clearly His; man could never have thought it out in this way. Naturally, he would never put himself in the position in which, nevertheless, divine grace finds him. He has not even "known the mind of the Lord," much less "been His counselor." "Of God and through God and to God are all things, to whom be glory for ever!"

Div. 4.

We come now to the practical results, the ways suited to these mercies of which the apostle has been speaking. The place in which practice comes we have seen far back, in the book of Numbers. We have in Genesis, life, the primary necessity; in Exodus, the knowledge of redemption; in Leviticus we are introduced into the sanctuary, into the presence of God, and learn the holiness that suits Him—ourselves now, what could not then be said, in nearness to Him; then we have in Numbers the practical walk through the world. So here we must first know the truth, as the Lord says, "that the truth may make us free," established in the position divine grace has given us. It is in that which is Christian in us that the Spirit of God alone works, in the new nature, not in the natural man. "Faith worketh by love," and then again it is love that appeals to love, and "perfect love," which is God's love towards us, "casts out fear, because fear hath torment," so that "he that feareth is not made perfect in love:" he has not yet got his lesson aright. Thus, we are set in the blessing at the outset. We have not to work into it to win it, and all this bears witness to the truth of the gospel, which is not of works, but of God's grace. We live and do, not do and live.

Subd. 1.

1. The harmony and universality of the obedience claimed are first brought before us. The principle with which we begin shows us this. The body is to be given up "a living sacrifice" to God. The body is the instrument of the spirit; and this so completely that, if it be laid hold of for Him, there is no

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. xii.–xvi.)

Ways suited to these mercies.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xii.)

The spirit of harmonious, universal obedience.

1 (1-3): The principle: the body a living sacrifice to the will of God.

1. I [y]EXHORT you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a [z]living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your [a]intelligent service. And be not [b]conformed to this age, but be transformed by the [c]renewal of your* mind, that ye may [d]prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

* Some omit "your."

y ctr. Gal. 3. 10. *cf.* Phil. 4. 2. *cf.* Philem. 8, 9.
z cf. ch. 6, 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 21.
a cf. Eph. 4. 17, 18.
b 1 John 2. 15 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 10. *cf.* Gen. 13. 10, 11.
c cf. Eph. 4. 23. *cf.* Tit. 3. 5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16.
d Eph. 5. 10.

part of the practical life but must, of necessity, be His. The feet are used to walk at His bidding, the hands to employ ourselves in His things, the tongue to speak for Him and nothing else, the ear to hear His words; the eye also, so that whatever it looks upon, it will look upon as being under His control. It is plain that the whole life, thus, finds its government. The body indeed, as the apostle has shown us, is dead; but as dead it can yet be used in the power of the Spirit of God, which, as we have seen, is in it expressly for this purpose, to make it a temple for His praise. People put the citadel of practical life too far in, and even sometimes seem to think they exalt the spirit by ignoring the body; no matter what the ear hears or the eye looks upon, the spirit may be unaffected by that, which, of course, is true in one respect; but the eye affects the heart, and if we allow the eye to wander away from His control, we have allowed the enemy thus far and he has already gained a victory. Here, as we can understand, there is indeed the call for sacrifice. We need to deny ourselves as those who belong to Another, "a living sacrifice" indeed, in contrast with those sacrifices of the law which were sacrifices in death. This is in life, but a most real one, and such a sacrifice the yoke of Christ already implies for us; easy as His yoke may be, and light His burden, still it is a yoke, a restraint upon the mere natural inclinations. There was but One who answered fully to the type of the red heifer, upon which never came yoke, He who could say with the whole heart: "I come to do Thy will," with whom there was nothing else than this; for Him there could be no yoke. But yoke as there may be, and something in us, as we all shall confess, that needs to be restrained; yet the mercies of God, as we have already seen them displayed in the gospel, persuade us to this full surrender of ourselves, not as a hard, but a joyful subjection. What, indeed, is there of freedom compared with that of walking in ways that are ways of perfect holiness, but also of perfect love, where divine wisdom guides us continually and where divine power encompasses us and guards us? Thus it is "by the mercies of God" that the apostle beseeches Christians to offer up their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, an intelligent service."

But around us is a scene in opposition to us and to God. "The age," not "the world," is that which we are not to be conformed to. In a sense it is the world, but this seen in its control of the whole scene through which we move. The age is never Christian, even though Christianity is fully come, and we may be now living in lands which are called Christian; yet the god of "the age," as the word really is (2 Cor. iv. 4), is Satan. The strongest possible expression is used. He is not merely the prince, but the god of this age, and we can understand the difficulty that all this presents for us and the need we have of power working with and through us, greater than our own. Another thing,—it was in this age that we had our part naturally, and we need actually to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that is, by our minds being made entirely

2 (3-8): Service according to the measure of faith.

2. For I say, through the grace given me, unto every one that is among you, not to be [d]high-minded, above the mind he ought to have, but to be sober-minded, as God hath apportioned to each the measure of faith. For as in [f]one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and [g]individually members one of the other. Now having [h]gifts different according to the grace given us, whether [i]prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith;

[e] 1 Pet.5.5,6. *cf.* Phil. 2. 3, 4.
[f] 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, etc. Eph. 4.4,11-13. *cf.* 1 Cor.10. 17.
[g] 1 Cor. 12. 27.
[h] Eph. 4.16. *cf.* Col.2.19.
[i] 1 Cor.14.1-4, etc.

anew, in order to escape from it. "Renewal" is here not that which we need as realizing the wear and tear of things, the mere refreshment and revival of strength, but the actual production of another spirit and temper altogether. We need, therefore, as is plain, the word of God as that which alone can expose the subtle influences which are all around us and deliver us from the plausible deceptions which are abroad. "The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We need the double edge of it, the one for ourselves, allowing our thoughts and intents to be searched out by it; the other for what is objectively before us. How blessed to know that the proving of the will of God which will thus be effected will realize how good, acceptable and perfect that will is! There is an experience here which every soul in the least divinely taught knows well, an experience which has in it the most wonderful encouragement. How can we tell rightly what the divine way is except as we walk in it? Who that has walked in it, whatever the apparent severity of its requirements, but knows the blessedness of this?

2. Now we have, in the next place, service. Service to God is what, of course, is implied in what we have already had. Now this is made practical as service to our brother. "If we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?" Our brother is thus the representative of God, of Him who is Father to us all; and the Church, as the body of Christ, of necessity means such a field of service. The apostle has not spoken of the Church, the epistle to the Romans does not enter upon this; but when we come to practice, the Church in fact exists, and it is the nearest thing to us that does exist. This, the apostle speaks of, therefore, at the very start, only he tells us that there is something we have to do in order to be fit for service in such a field as this. We must learn to esteem *ourselves* aright, "not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath given to each the measure of faith." Faith is not measured in the sense of its being so limited that it might possibly fail us for any work that is ours. Its limit is only found when we get outside our own sphere, and take up, perhaps, another's work. We shall not find faith for *that*. Thus we have to learn our capacity; but here again we cannot learn this by simply looking in upon ourselves. We cannot estimate our capacity until we have in measure proved it, and that is how God leads us on, not only making us know the qualification for what service He has made ours, but developing in us also the gift which He has given. Love, of necessity, sets us to work: it is the spirit of service. Love alone will prompt us, in view of needs we find, to do what we can to minister to them. Here, if it be love, we are safeguarded also, for love is the lowliest thing that can be. It "seeketh not its own," and thus pride and ambition are necessarily foreign to it; they are its contradiction, its opposite. But as we are brought into contact with the need around, and in love seek to do whatever lowly service God may give us, we find in practical working what God has indeed fitted us for, and only in such a way is knowledge truly acquired. It is noticeable, when we come to the Gentiles, how the apostle here puts together things that are clearly "gifts" in the way in which we ordinarily speak,—

or [j]ministering, [let us occupy ourselves] in ministering; or he that [k]teacheth, in teaching; or he that [l]exhorteth, in exhortation; he that [m]giveth, [let it be] in

[j] *cf.* Col. 4. 17. *cf.* Acts 6. 1, etc. [k] *cf.* Eph. 4. 11.

cf. 2 Tim. 2. 2, 15. [l] *cf.* Heb. 3. 13; 10. 25; 13. 22. [m] *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 10-15.

public gifts for the Church,—and things that are of the most private character. Prophecy comes first; then ministry; a large and general term used for it, which has been ecclesiastically narrowed into "deaconship;" then teaching, exhortation, but next, giving, and after that, ruling and showing mercy. It is as if the apostle foresaw the distinctions which have in fact come in, and that Christians would divide into different classes upon these points. In the first case even, there is a character of prophecy which applies to the whole Church. "Ye may all prophesy," says the apostle elsewhere, "one by one;" and he adds, "Covet to prophesy." Again, if we are not all teachers, we may all *teach*, according to our ability. Exhortation is necessarily a thing wide enough in character and all ought to find their place here also. In fact, there is never a limit to the use of anything we have, except that we do not go beyond the measure of spiritual ability. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." As already said, love and lowliness,—and the two go together,—will find their way everywhere without difficulty. To dwell upon ourselves is not the divine preparation. Love leads us out of ourselves and occupies us with others, while indeed we do learn practically, as already said, what God has qualified us for, but we learn it in the presence of others and with the necessary safeguards which practical experience furnishes for us.

But let us notice now, that in the order here, prophecy comes first. No doubt the apostle has in contemplation especially what was the gift so needed at that time, and which filled out divine revelation to its present fulness; but we are not surely to confine it to this. The first place in which we find it should make us realize the blessed position we have in Christianity as thus brought near to God, and with the most ample opportunity and encouragement in learning His mind. As the prophet said of old: "God will do nothing, but He will make it known to His servants the prophets." And now, His full mind being made known to us in Christ, the practical possession of this, and in such a way as that we shall have a word for every emergency that can arise, is open to us all. The exhortation here is that men prophesy "according to the proportion of faith," words which have been variously taken; but we can understand that faith is the whole matter here, and that for us the word of God furnishes with all that faith has to do with. It will ever be in entire dependence upon this, which, of necessity, therefore, tests all that can be called such.

In the three next cases, the great point is to occupy ourselves with that which God has really entrusted to us. We may lose the practical possession of our gift to almost any extent, by failing to use it, and, in fact, how much ministry is thus lost to the Church! Timidity, lack of confidence in God, but which necessarily goes, therefore, with a lack, more or less, of that divine love which would make us forget ourselves and break through all barriers which are not of God Himself,—these things may make us to be really unconscious of what God has endowed us with, much more, of what He would lead us on to. For "to him that hath, shall more be given." Let him that teacheth, therefore, occupy himself with his teaching, a gift which is specially apt to be encroached upon by demands of another character. Teaching is naturally of slower development than, for instance, evangelizing. We need to acquire the knowledge which we are to use in this way; but how many things come in here to hinder even the proper furnishing with this knowledge! The order of acquirement that Peter gives us is: "Add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge." "Virtue" is there the soldier's virtue,—courage. It is that spirit of decision which at any cost carries us on. If all God's various knowledge lies open before us, who would not desire to possess himself of it? But there is need for it to be practical, for God will not give that which is to be trifled with or hoarded

simplicity;* he that [n]leadeth, with diligence; he that [o]showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

3 (9-21): Fruit in holiness.

3. Let love be [p]unfeigned, [q]abhorring evil, cleaving to good; in brotherly love kindly affectioned towards one another; in [r]honor anticipating one another; in [s]diligence not slothful; [t]fervent in spirit; [u]serving the

n *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. *cf.* Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24.
o *cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 7. *cf.* Ex. 25. 2.
p 1 Pet. 1. 22. *ctr.* Ezek. 33. 31.
q 1 Thess. 5. 21, 22.

* Or, "liberality."

cf. Ps. 119. 104; *cf.* Am. 5. 15. r *cf.* Phil. 2. 3; *cf.* Eph. 3. 8. s Heb. 6. 12; *cf.* Prov. 24. 30-34. t *cf.* Acts 18. 25. u *cf.* Col. 3. 24.

up merely. He gives for use, and we must have courage to use it. It seems more difficult, perhaps, to realize how "he that exhorteth" is to occupy himself with exhortation. Exhortation, we say, can only be as the need arises, but still how many needs there are. How much, in fact, is before our eyes that we excuse ourselves, perhaps, from having to do with,—and the inventive faculty is great in making excuses. Exhortation is not, as we know, apt to be always an acceptable thing, and then again we have to guard our own spirits carefully with regard to it.

Next we have: "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." That has been variously put as liberality, but, in fact, the two things are very similar. A man that gives simply will do it liberally. The need will appeal to him and the love that is in him be aroused by the need; and true love is wise; there is no blindness about it. Divine love is, in fact, never separate from divine wisdom.

Next, we have "he that ruleth" or "he that leadeth." The leader is of necessity, to a large extent, the ruler also, but there is no absolute rule, except that of the Spirit in the church of God; but he that realizes that he is leading others has, of necessity, much responsibility attaching to this. If his word is weighty, he must be the more careful. The apostle says here, he must rule or lead "with diligence," that is, not careless of what he is doing, not at random, but as giving thought and care to that which is having effect upon the minds of others. The apostle closes here with, "he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."* These are, of course, only specimens of how we are to use the gifts that are given to us, and the opportunity of showing mercy is itself, in a way, a gift.

3. Next comes what we shall realize more as fruit in holiness. That word "fruit," which we do not find here, we shall find in Galatians in a striking connection (Gal. v. 22, comp. ver. 19). Here we have the fruit of the Spirit in contrast with the works of the flesh. Activity is not necessarily fruit, as we must easily realize. Fruit is a growth, the product of life, and which needs nurture and maturing in order to be right and ripe. There is a unity about it which in work there is not. In how many directions the flesh may work, even religiously; but fruit in holiness cannot be mistaken for this. Here the apostle's first word is that which brings us to the heart of the matter. Love is the divine nature. It is, in a sense, the whole thing, but then we make so many mistakes about it, that we need to have this carefully guarded. Love itself abhors that which is evil, cleaves to that which is good. You cannot, in fact, cleave to what is good without abhorring the evil which is its opposite. Then, how much there is in the world of the affectation of love, an outside show of it which may deceive even, not merely others, but one's self also. How often we mistake in our estimation of the reality of the love we have to others. People are necessary to us, they minister to our pleasure. We appreciate that, value them in a

* Showing mercy, while a general term, is sufficiently definite for us to get its meaning. It does not mean forgiveness, or showing mercy in that sense, but rather all acts of kindness and charity—as illustrated by the good Samaritan. This mercy is to be shown, not grudgingly but "with cheerfulness," "hilarity" as the word literally is—a kind of exhibition of that "merry heart which doeth good like a medicine." It need hardly be said that this is farthest removed from a worldly levity which would grieve the Spirit of God.—S. R.

Lord; in [v]hope rejoicing; in [w]tribulation enduring; in [z]prayer persevering; [y]communicating to the needs of the saints, pursuing [z]hospitality. [a]Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not. [b]Rejoice with those that rejoice, [and] weep with those that weep. Have the [c]same mind one towards another, not affecting high things, but consorting with the [d]lowly; be not [e]wise in your own eyes; repaying no one [f]evil for evil; [g]careful to have things right before all men; if it be possible, as far as dependeth upon [h]you, being at peace with all men; not [i]avenging yourselves, beloved, on the contrary [j]give place unto wrath; for it is [k]written, Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith [the] Lord. Therefore, [l]if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not [m]overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

v ch. 15. 13.
w ch. 5. 3–5.
x *cf.* Phil. 4. 4–7.
y Heb. 13. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 17–19.
z 1 Pet. 4. 9. *cf.* 3 Jno. 5–8.
a Matt. 5. 44. *cf.* Lk. 23. 34. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 21–23.
b *cf.* Jno. 11. 33–35.
c *cf.* Phil. 3. 15, 16.
d Ps. 131. *cf.* Ps. 16. 2, 3.
e Prov. 26. 12. Prov. 14. 12.
f Prov. 14. 29. Matt. 5. 38, 39. *g* 2 Cor. 8. 21; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 12. *h* *cf.* Gen. 26. 20–22; *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7, 8. *i* Lev. 19. 18; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 15; *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 8–11. *j* *cf.* Matt. 5. 39–42; *cf.* Phil. 4. 5. *k* Deut. 32. 35; Heb. 10. 30. *l* Prov. 25. 21, 22; *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 22; *cf.* Lk. 6. 27. *m* *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 9; *cf.* Prov. 15. 1; *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

sense, and call this love, but "love seeketh not her own." It does not claim, but ministers. The love, here again, is brotherly love. The apostle is not traveling beyond that at the present moment; and again we see how self-denying it is, all the more, perhaps, because it does not dream that it is self-denial. "In honor preferring one another," ready to give that which others might suppose to be our own due. All this clearly connects together.

The next clause has been much abused, and misunderstanding has arisen from the way in which words in course of time alter their meaning. "Business" we so naturally refer to our temporal occupations; these are the things, in fact, in which men commonly and necessarily, as they believe, are most "busy," but the word simply means "diligence": "In diligence not slothful." There is a way in which we may be busy about things without real diligence. All is to be earnest with us, we are to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The character of the One we serve should be enough to enforce that. No detail of duty to Him can be a light matter.

Next we have "rejoicing in hope." Alas, how the present, with its calls and duties, may interfere with that! We need continually to have our heads up and to be contemplating the unseen realities which are ours. Here we have a material for rejoicing which will never fail us, and which will carry us, as the apostle reminds us here, through tribulation itself. "In tribulation enduring"; still not without the need of realizing our dependence upon the One who carries us, and therefore "in prayer persevering." We need to realize that the prayer which may seem little effective, has nevertheless, always its answer from God. It may not be, of course, just in the way in which we imagine, but answered in some way, it surely will be.

Next we have, "communicating to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality." A glance now, at the outside, hostile world is given us, and yet may the exhortation be always confined to that? "Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not." There are, alas, here also forms of persecution which may find their place even in the ranks of the saints. With all this, we are not to be shut up in ourselves. We are to "rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep." How much of joy is open to us in this way of which we do not, in fact, avail ourselves, and how much of sorrow do we shut ourselves out from, when it is just the school which God would make fruitful for ourselves! Then we are to have "the same mind one towards another," an equal mind, without

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xiii.)

As strangers and pilgrims in the world.

1 (1-7): Obedience to authorities.

1. LET every soul be [n]subject to the authorities above [him]. For there is no authority except from * God; and those that exist have been [o]appointed of God. So that he who setteth himself against the authority [p]withstandeth the ordinance of God; and those who withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

* ὑπο, "under" which suggests subjection to Him.

n 1 Pet. 2.13-17. cf. Prov. 24. 21.
o cf. Jno. 19. 11. cf. Gen. 9. 5, 6. cf. 1 Sa. 10. 1. cf. Dan. 2. 21. cf. Ezek. 21. 27.
p cf. Acts 23. 2-5. cf. 2 Pet. 2. 10, 11.

regard of persons. "Not affecting high things, but consorting with the lowly." That, of course, goes with this, this equal mind towards all: one who seeks high things for himself cannot practice it. "Be not wise," he adds, "in your own eyes."

Finally, as realizing the strife that is going on between good and evil, we are to abide in the good, assured that here is that which alone can overcome it. "Evil for evil" can never overcome evil. We are to be careful to have "things right before all men," as the word here means, so as to give no occasion to the adversary. As to one's own spirit, as far as it depends upon us, (as we familiarly say, "It takes two to make a quarrel,") we are to be "at peace with all men." Nothing can invade this sanctuary of ours unless we open it to the invasion. The spirit of revenge will surely do this. On the contrary, we are to give place unto wrath, not meet it with wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord."* We must not take the judge's place, and we must not desire to do so. Love is still that which overcomes here. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

SUBD. 2.

1. Now we have the Christian attitude toward the outside world, to which we are not to be conformed. "Strangers and pilgrims" in it, we yet recognize, surely, all that is of God. Government is of God, not this or that form of it; there is no decision as to what is best or of any form being best. The world is outside of us and all that belongs to it, but God's hand is in it and over it, and with a restraining power upon the evil, which is immense mercy to all. Government is of God, whatever exists, whatever we find practically in the place in which we are. We are only passing through, and it is not ours to meddle or make. Any form of government whatever is comparatively beneficial: think of what anarchy would mean. While all forms fail, as Daniel at large shows us, because the One who alone is capable of exercising perfectly righteous rule has not come. God's mercy comes in everywhere to temper things; but the world is in opposition to God and therefore to us. As long as we are here, there will never be another condition of the world. Our place is in the world to come. There we shall reign with Christ, but now, if the apostle says to Christians, "Ye have reigned as kings," it is plainly a reproach on his lips, and he adds "*without us.*" If they got reigning, they were out of communion with the apostles, clearly; *they* were more apt to be in a prison than on a throne; and, if we are to be in communion with the apostles, it must be so still with us. If we say times have changed and our conduct therefore must change with that, the world is still the world, if it is without God. If it is with God, it is not in the

* The above is not the ordinary interpretation of this clause, though it seems to be the true one. Most commentators interpret it by what follows, "Give place to (God's) wrath, for vengeance is Mine." That is, wait on God who will execute vengeance in due time. But this is hardly in accord with a Christian spirit, which desires neither its own nor divine vengeance. The simple and natural thought would be that of yielding, turning the other cheek to the smiter.—S. R.

For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Dost thou desire then not to be afraid of the authority? [q]Practise good, and thou shalt have praise from it; for he is a minister of God to thee for good; but if thou practise evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, an [r]avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore one must needs be in subjection, not only for the wrath, but also for [s]conscience sake. For for this cause ye pay [t]tribute also; for they are God's officers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to [u]all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

2 (8–10): The debt to all men.

2. [v]Owe no one anything, save to [w]love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal,* Thou shalt not lust, and if there

q 1 Pet. 2 14. cf. 1 Pet. 4. 15. cf. 1 Pet. 3. 13.
r cf. 2 Chro. 19. 6. cf. 1 Tim. 1. 8-10.
s cf. Heb. 13. 18. cf. Acts 24. 16.
t cf. Matt. 17. 27.
u Mk. 12. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 17, 18.
v cf. Lev. 19. 13. cf. Prov. 22. 7. cf. Ps. 37. 21.
w cf. Col. 1. 4. cf. 1 Pet. 1. 22, etc.

* Some add, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

evil sense "the world"; but who will assert that, however Christianized it may apparently be, the mass is not truly the world any longer? If this shifts for us, if the world is gradually growing better and our position in it is to be affected by that, then we are without practical guidance in the word of God. The changed times would require a new Bible. The Lord's prophetic words speak of His disciples being brought before rulers and kings for a testimony against them and the nations, nothing else. The apostle of the Gentiles is left at the close of the Acts in the Gentile prison; and, while we find in his epistles careful directions for Christians as subjects, there are plainly none for Christian kings or magistrates. We may say, perhaps, that there were none at that time, but that does not argue that there would be none; the coming king was provided for in Judaism long before he came, as well as the absolutely necessary law book in which he would find the divine laws which he was to execute. Think of Christian magistrates and kings to execute laws other than divine! Plainly, nothing of all this is given to us; and yet we accept the authorities that are as "ordained of God," and "he who setteth himself against the authority, withstands the ordinance of God." Thus, plainly, "he will receive to himself judgment." Nothing that is of God can rightly be resisted, and on the whole, through His mercy, things are so ordered that rulers are still His ministers for good, not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Blessed it is to be able to realize how, through all that seems to be most opposed to Him, God nevertheless works, and thus we are to be in subjection for conscience' sake. How good to know that in every circumstance of this world through which we pass, while yet we are strangers in it, the world is not so strange but that we shall find God everywhere, and things that seem the most contrary, yet ordered by Him. If, indeed, the governments of the world yet require of us that which is in plain conflict with the word of God, we must obey Him rather than men, but in suffering, not resisting. This the apostle carries out to the smallest detail. We are to render to all their dues: "Tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honor" also "to whom honor." We are not permitted, even, to have freedom of speech against that which is of God's institution.

2. Now comes the debt to all men. Here, it is not a question of loving the brethren merely. We are to owe *no* one anything save to love one another, and here it is pointed out that we have the fulfilment of that which the law sought, but could never obtain. Love is that which is the fulfilment of the law, or the whole of it, for if we love our neighbor as ourselves, love works no ill to

be any other commandment, it is [x]summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to one's neighbor, therefore love is the whole law.*

3 (11-14): As manifest children of light.

3. This also, knowing the time, that it is already the hour to [y]arouse out of sleep; for now is our salvation [z]nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the [a]day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the [b]works of darkness, and let us put on the [c]armor of light. Let us walk [d]becomingly, as in the day, not in [e]revellings and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy; but [f]put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no [g]provision for the flesh, to [fulfill its] lusts.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. xiv.–xv. 7).

The conscience to be in each one before the Lord.

1 (xiv.1-12): The authority of the Lord over all.

1. NOW him that is [h]weak in the faith receive, not to [i]doubtful points of reasoning.† One man believeth he may eat [j]all things; another who is weak eateth [k]herbs. Let not him that eateth [l]despise him

* Literally, "the fulness of the law."
† Or, "not to deciding his doubts."

h ch. 15. 1; *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 9; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 9. 22; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 14; *cf.* Acts 20. 35. *i* *cf.* ver. 22. *j* ver. 14; *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Acts 10. 15. *k* *cf.* Dan. 1. 8-16; *cf.* Matt. 23. 23. *l* *cf.* Gal. 5. 13-15; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 16.

x Lev.19.18. *cf.*Matt.22. 37-40.
y Eph. 5.14. 1 Cor.15.34.
z *cf.* Jas. 5. 7, 8. *cf.* Heb. 10. 25, 37. *cf.* Rev. 22. 20.
a *cf.*1Thess. 5. 4, 5. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16. *cf.* Mal.4.2.
b Eph. 5.11, 12.
c *cf.*1 Thess. 5. 8.
d 1 Pet.2.12. 1 Thess. 4. 12.
e Gal. 5. 21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 2-6.
f *cf.* Eph. 4. 20-24. *cf.* Col. 3.9-11. *cf.*2 Cor.12. 9.
g *cf.* Gal. 5. 16, 24. *cf.* ch. 6.12-14. *cf.* ch. 8.12.

one's neighbor. The commandments give us only the prohibition of these various forms of ill. Love owns the debt to all men and pays it. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

3. We have now another thing. We are "children of the light and of the day." We walk in the night and in the darkness, but the darkness is passing away. The hour of dawn is approaching. It is already time to be aroused out of sleep. Our salvation, final salvation of course, is getting ever nearer, but for us, already the light shines upon us. If it has not come for the world, for us it has come. We are in it in such sort that we should be reflecting it. Heaven is open to us, and the glory in the face of Christ already shines upon us. Practically to enjoy this is to manifest it and to manifest what we are. It is to put on the armor of light. Who is unaware of what a defence light is in itself in the midst of darkness? The evil deeds of men are done in the darkness. Light reproves them. How blessed to walk in the joy of that which manifests us for what we are, and which, by its presence in us, rebukes evil and breaks, as it were, the power of temptation; but we have, therefore, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in a practical way. It is, in fact, but to sit in the sun and the sun will make its mark upon us; but that means the heart laid hold of and therefore no thought of provision for the flesh, which, with its lusts, belong to the darkness.

SUBD. 3.

We have now the settlement of questions which are not merely, as we may say, questions, but the settlement of which announces a principle which is of the utmost importance for us and for all with whom we walk. In our relationship to the Church, (for that is all that is spoken of here,) the question of conscience is one that has to be carefully considered. Conscience is individual to each one of us, but then that means that there are other consciences outside of ours, and which we have to regard. How important that we should know, both

that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not [m]judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest [n]another's servant? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand: for the Lord* is [o]able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one [p]day more than another; another esteemeth every day [alike]: let each be fully [q]assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;† and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God [r]thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For [s]none of us liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself; for whether we [t]live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we [u]die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

* Some read, "God."

† Many add, "And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

m *cf.* Col. 2. 16. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11–13.
n *cf.* Jas. 4. 11, 12. Matt. 7. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 29.
o *cf.* ch. 16. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 9.
p *cf.* Gal. 4. 10.
q vers. 14, 23.
r 1 Tim. 4. 4.
s *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.
t *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13–15. *cf.* Gal. 2. 20. *cf.* 2 Sam. 15. 18–22.
u *cf.* Acts 20. 24. *cf.* Acts 21. 13. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20, 21.

for ourselves how to keep a good conscience, and how to help to maintain at the same time that in others which we realize for ourselves to be of first necessity!

1. What the apostle puts first, therefore, here, is that conscience must be before the Lord. He is the Governor of the conscience and He alone, but this means then, of course, that we are to permit other consciences to be before the Lord. We must leave each one, therefore, to his liberty in this. Nay, we must fear to be a conscience to any one, and thus, with whatever good intent, to take one away from being before God. What is here sought to be established first, therefore, is just that the only authority for the Christian is that of the Lord. A serious question for us all is how far this is real with us. How much human relationships come in and hinder! There is the relationship of children with parents; they are to obey their parents in all things. The wife with her husband, also. What is she to do when there is a conflict of judgment with regard to anything? Alas, the snare which may beset us here is a very real one. "Subject in all things" it is urged sometimes is put as without limit, but the moment we bring in God, there are conditions necessarily implied by the very fact that He is God; and so necessarily implied that they need not even be named. We need scarcely to be reminded of them. If a parent taught his child to steal, is the child to be "subject in all things"? There is a limit somewhere, as is clear. Where is the limit? It can be found nowhere except here, that the plain will of the Lord governs, whatever human will may clash with it. We are not to drift from that for the sake of company with others, or under any plea whatever of relationship to others. That which makes real all relationships, which gives its value to them all, is above them all. Relationship to God is the first relationship of all, and to be indifferent to this is to make all else valueless. In fact, it is really to undo all the bonds of society; all human relationship is violated if that to God be violated. Thus it is that if we have sinned against our neighbor, it is sin against God, and if we sin against God, it is necessarily against our neighbor.

Necessarily, the things in which one has to yield here, therefore, are things indifferent. That is what the apostle is speaking of, of meats and drinks and days. It is supposed that on both sides the authority of the Lord is owned. One cannot be really liberal in things that are not one's own. One can give up one's own liberty where it is simply a question of that, and not only we can, but we ought. The supposition here is of religious scruple entirely, not of people without conscience, but of conscience in fact rigidly governed by that which to them, whatever be the truth of it, is the will of the Lord. If a man eats, he

For to this end Christ died and lived, that he might be [v]Lord both of dead and living. But thou, why judgest thou thy brother? or again, thou, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall [w]all stand before the judgment-seat of God.* For it is [x]written, [As] I live, saith [the] Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 (13-23): The love of one's brother as a motive also.

2. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, not to put a [y]stumblingblock or an occasion to fall† in a brother's way. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that there is [z]nothing unclean in itself; except that to him that [a]accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if

v *cf.* Rev. 1. 17, 18. *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 13–18.
w *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 13–15. *ctr.* Rev. 20. 11, etc.
x Is. 45. 23. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10, 11.
y *cf.* Lk. 17. 1, 2. *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 7–13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 23. *cf.* Rev. 2. 14.
z vers. 2, 20. *cf.* Tit. 1. 15.
a *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 24-33; *cf.* ver. 23.

* A few read, "of Christ." † Literally, "fall trap."

eats to the Lord, or if he eats not, it is still to the Lord; if he observes the day, he observes it to the Lord, or to the Lord he does not observe it. Here a question may be raised with regard to the Lord's Day. How does the principle here affect that? It would seem that it does not come into the question; just because the Lord's Day is given us not in the way of legal command, but as a privilege which must be accepted as privilege in order for the observance to be anything really acceptable to God,—not that it is supposed that a Christian could have a scruple religiously about observing the day in this case or on this ground. Religious scruples are the whole matter here and who could scruple to avail himself of the privilege of giving up a day to the Lord, a day free for him to be occupied with his own things, and in such a manner as we find Scripture before us? Question here, therefore, could scarcely be made. What the apostle has before him is, of course, as the meats and drinks show, the Jewish distinction of meats and days, which has passed away, but which, nevertheless, may have a real power over the minds of some who realize that these things were once given of God, and who do not see how He has brought us out of them. Here the principle applies which the apostle has stated elsewhere, that to those who were under the law he became as under the law, "*not being myself under the law*," as he carefully adds; "that I might gain those that are under the law." These are the questions, but the principle as we have said, the first principle here, is that the conscience is to be before the Lord alone; and that we are to leave every Christian free to act before God. We must not judge. The Lord will do that. "Every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess to God." It is of the first importance that in every question of conscience this should be maintained.

2. But there is another motive beside, that of duty to our brother. Our love to our brother is to be a motive. We are to consider what it means to put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in a brother's way. Let it be the lightest thing imaginable, the use of only meat to him unclean, yet our use of it may lead him into that which he has not faith for, and how could love possibly do this? A terrible thing it is to lead a person to act without conscience; that is, therefore, to sin against God. It is a thing which will necessarily have influence, if self-judgment do not come in, upon the whole character of his life and ways. We may be for ourselves doing that which is perfectly lawful to us, (in itself lawful,) and yet the question of a brother's conscience with regard to it cannot be ignored. We are not forced to eat or drink, because it is our privilege to do so. The Kingdom of God does not in its character consist of eating and drinking and such like things, but in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Here the one who is, while free in his inmost soul, a bond-

thy brother is [b]grieved on account of [thy] food, thou walkest no longer in love: destroy not with thy food him for whom Christ died. Let not then your [c]good be evil spoken of: for the [d]kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but [e]righteousness and [f]peace and [g]joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in this is bond-servant to Christ is [h]well-pleasing to God and [i]approved of men. So then let us pursue the things that are for peace, and the things that are for [j]edification with regard to one another: do not for the sake of food throw down God's work. All things indeed are clean; but it is [k]evil to the man that eateth while stumbling.* It is good [l]not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [to do] anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, [or is offended, or is weak.]† Hast thou faith? have it to [m]thyself before God. Happy is he who [n]judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that [o]doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith; but [p]whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

3 (xv. 1-7): For the glory of God.

3. Now we that are [q]strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of

* Or, "through the offence (given)." † Some MSS. omit.

b *cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 11. c *ctr.* ch. 3. 8. d *cf.* Gal. 4. 9–11. *cf.* Col. 2. 20–23. e *cf.* ch. 8. 4, 10. f *cf.* Phil. 2. 1–4. g *cf.* Phil. 4. 4–7. h *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 9. i *cf.* Lk. 2. 52. *cf.* Acts. 2. 47. j ch. 15. 2. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 11. *cf.* Eph. 4. 16. k ver. 14. l 1 Cor. 8. 13. 2 Cor. 6. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 33. *cf.* Acts 16. 1–3. m *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 13. ver. 5. n *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 21. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 8. o ver. 2; *cf.* Jas. 1. 6–8. p *cf.* Heb. 11. 6. q *cf.* Gal. 6. 1.

servant to Christ,—(the apostle puts the strongest term)—will not allow the freedom that he really has to prevent him forgetting that he is bound in every way to use his freedom to glorify Christ with it; this man is "well pleasing to God and approved of men." We are to pursue, therefore, the things that are for peace, and the things that are for edification with regard to others. Think of destroying God's work in another for the sake of a piece of meat; for while the things themselves may be clean, it still is evil to the man who eats while he stumbles over it. "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is weak." You may say, you have faith. Well, he says, but faith is after all the lowliest of things. Faith is realized dependence, is it not? Act in it in lowliness, "Have it to thyself before God;" and remember that, "Happy is he who does not bring judgment upon himself in that which he approveth;" but this is the very thing that the doubter does. He is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." How important is this principle, and in how wide a sphere! How important it is that we should so act in every case as not to induce the weakest or those nearest to us,—where our conduct is apt to have the strongest weight,—to walk without God! It will be no excuse for them before Him, to say that they have followed us. God's will is not so far to seek and not so hard to be understood as to allow of excuse here on the part of any, but the point is clearly especially for the strong, that they are not, by their strength, really to force others into paths, which, because doubtful to them, are necessarily wrong, even though the path looked at in itself may be a right one.

3. There is another principle which comes in here, though it be understood, as we may say, all the way through. We are here for the glory of God. "We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for that which is good to edification;" not, therefore, as seeking to please him merely, but with a careful estimate of what will be blessing for him. As for pleasing ourselves in such things, "Christ pleased not Himself." He who was for God in the world always, who gave

us [r]please his neighbor for that which is good to edification. For [s]Christ also pleased not himself, but as it is [t]written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For [u]whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through [v]endurance and through [w]comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of endurance and of comfort give you to be [x]likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one accord, with one mouth, [y]glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore [z]receive ye one another even [a]as Christ also received you, to the [b]glory of God.

r *cf.* Phil. 2. 4. *cf.* Phile. 7.
s *cf.* Matt. 17. 27. *cf.* Lk. 9. 51. *cf.* Phil. 2. 5-8.
t Ps. 69. 9. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 23.
u 2 Tim. 3. 16. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 11.
v *cf.* ch. 5. 3.
w *cf.* Ps. 119. 50. *cf.* Jas. 5. 7-11. *x cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10; Phil. 1. 27. *y cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 31; *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 11. *z cf.* ch. 16. 2; *cf.* Phil. 2. 29; *cf.* 2 Jno. 10, 11; ch. 14. 1. *a cf.* Lk. 7. 36-50 with 1 Jno. 1. 9. *cf.* Lk. 5. 27, 28; *ctr.* Lk. 18. 18-30. *b cf.* Ex. 12. 43-48; *cf.* Num. 9. 9-14; *cf.* Num. 19. 11-22.

Himself no margin, desired none, because His law was in His heart,—"Christ pleased not Himself," but "the reproaches of them that reproached Thee," He says, "fell on Me." These things are, it is plain, then, principles of the highest importance for the Christian, and the Scriptures lead us in paths which are not merely right, but which have in them the blessing and the joy which go with the right, for in this way God is the God of endurance and of comfort. The comfort is to enable to endure, and it is abundant for this. It is thus He would make us "likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus," in order that we may, "with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, then, is that which finally governs all. We are to "receive one another (it is plain from the beginning in what sense he means this) even as Christ received us, to the glory of God." The principle, of course, we may use as widely as it will carry us, but we must remember what the apostle is about when he is speaking so. He is simply enjoining the reception of one another without regard to these things which are indifferent in themselves. Here he can urge the glory of God as to be maintained by that which, in such cases ignores this difference.

SUBD. 4.

There follows now what in some sense is supplementary to the whole epistle while it is, no doubt, in special relationship to those questions which we have just had discussed, and which are clearly such as would be most likely to affect the harmony of a mixed assembly of Jews and Gentiles, as that at Rome perhaps in an especial manner was. It reminds them of what the Old Testament had declared as to the acceptance of the Gentiles, an object for which, while minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers, Christ had no less wrought. And this leads the apostle into a brief reference to his own labors to the same end, as the apostle of the Gentiles, and to declare once more his unfeigned desire to see the saints at Rome, of which he had spoken at the beginning of the epistle. It is a human appeal which could not fail to have from one like Paul its moral effect in the same direction as what precedes it. At the same time, the comparative slightness of treatment, compared, for instance, with his defence of his ministry in the epistle to the Galatians, answers to its supplementary place here as compared with its foremost one in that which is distinctly controversial.

1. He owns the place that Christ primarily occupied as minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. It was in this character that Israel rejected Him, although the testimony as to it did not end with the Cross, but was continued in that of the Spirit afterward. But the promises which He thus confirmed themselves contemplated the blessing of the nations, and the apostles were distinctly commissioned to bear witness to Him in the whole world. The

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. xv. 8–33.)

The human appeal and apology of the apostle of the Gentiles.

1 (8-13): Christ's ministry having in view the whole world.

1. FOR I say that* Christ became [c] minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the [d] nations might glorify God for [his] mercy; according as it is [e] written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the nations,† and sing unto thy Name. And [f] again he saith, Rejoice, ye nations,† with his people. And [g] again, Praise the Lord, all ye nations,† and laud‡ him, all ye peoples. And [h] again, Esaias saith, There shall be the Root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the nations; † in him shall the nations† hope. Now the [i] God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope in the [j] power of the Holy Spirit.

2 (14-33): Paul's own ministry.

2. And I myself also am [k] persuaded of you, my brethren, that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to [l] admonish one another. But I

c ch. 1. 3. Matt. 2. 2. *cf.* Jno. 19. 15, 19-22.
d *cf.* Matt. 15. 21-28. *cf.* ch. 3. 29, 30.
e Ps. 18. 49. *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
f Deut. 32. 43.
g Ps. 117. 1.
h Is. 11. 10. *cf.* Acts 15. 14-18.
i *cf.* ver. 5. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
j *cf.* ch. 5. 5.
k *cf.* 2 Thes. 3. 4. *cf.* Gal. 5. 10. *cf.* Heb. 6. 9, etc.
l *cf.* Heb. 10. 25. *cf.* 2 Thess. 3. 15.

* Some put in "Jesus" here before Christ; and a few put it after.
† Or, "Gentiles."
‡ Some of the earliest MSS. have, "and let all the peoples laud him."

psalmist had joined with the prophets and with Israel's own law-giver, as the quotations show here, in expanding these promises in fuller and more definite statements. There could, of course, be in these no announcement of the Church, the body of Christ, which was a secret hid in God till Israel refused the grace which had first of all been offered to her; but of this the apostle is not here speaking, nor is the doctrine of it in the epistle at all. The nations were to rejoice with His special people, and the root of Jesse to be their Ruler and confidence. The branches of the wild olive were, in fact, being grafted into Israel's olive-tree, though this did not mean the relinquishment on God's part of promises which were to be fulfilled to the nation in due time. The Old Testament bore witness that God had the Gentiles in remembrance; Israel's blindness in part might change the character of things for the time being, it being impossible to recognize them in this blindness of unbelief. Gentiles and Jews would thus of necessity be brought together in a way beyond that which the prophets contemplated; but this was almost necessarily the result of the Jews' own exceptional position through their sin. God's purpose of blessing to the Gentiles could not wait for this.

The apostle does not enter into all this, but it is in the strict line of his argument and easily to be understood. It was better left, perhaps, to be worked out by themselves. He closes this with an earnest prayer in behalf of the Roman saints. In the revelation God had made of Himself, whether to the disheartened adherents of the dying paganism, or to the remnant of Israel disappointed of their national expectations. He had indeed approved Himself as the God of hope. In the realization of the blessings which were now become their own, they could afford to bury their dead past, and forget it. He prays that they may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, so as to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. How good to make full proof of the possibilities that are in our hands! and how do we possess ourselves of what is our possession! This is for a lamentation, and must be for a lamentation.

2. Paul speaks out the confidence of his heart in these Roman brethren whom as yet he had not seen. He credits them in the frankness of Christian love with the due moral effect of their faith, and with the enlightenment proceeding from

have written to you, brethren,* the more boldly in part, as [m]putting you in mind because of the grace given me from God, that I should be a [n]minister of Christ Jesus† unto the nations, ministering in priestly service the gospel of God, that the [o]offering of the nations might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.‡ I [p]have therefore my§ glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God, for I will not dare to speak anything of the things which Christ has [q]not wrought by me for the obedience of the nations, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that [r]from Jerusalem and in a circuit round unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; being jealous‖ so to preach the gospel, [s]not where Christ was named, that I might not [t]build upon another's foundation; but according as it is [u]written, They shall see, to whom no tidings concerning him had come; and they who have not heard shall understand. Wherefore also I was [v]hindered these many times from coming to you; but now, having no longer [w]place in these regions, and a [x]longing these many years to come to you whenever I take my journey into Spain,¶ I hope as I pass through to get sight of you, and by you to be [y]set forward thither, if first in measure I be [z]satisfied with your company. But now

* Some omit "brethren." † Many read, "Jesus Christ."
‡ Some read, "Spirit of God." § That is, "ground for glorying."
‖ The same word as in 2 Cor. v. 9, which might be rendered, "making it a point of honor." ¶ Some insert, "I will come to you."

m 1 Jno. 2. 21. 2 Pet. 3.1,2.
n cf. ch. 11. 13. *cf.* Gal.2.7-10. *cf.*Eph.3.8.
*o cf.*Is.66.20. *cf.* Num.8. 5-16.
p cf. 2 Cor. 11. 16, etc.
*q cf.*Acts 15. 12. *cf.*2 Cor.12. 1, 11.
*r cf.*Acts 22. 17-21. *cf.* Acts 26. 17-20.
*s cf.*Acts 16. 6-10, etc.
t cf. 1 Cor. 3. 10. *cf.*2 Cor.10. 13-18.
u Is. 52. 15. *cf.* Acts 13. 46, 47.
v ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Acts 16. 6, 7. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 18.
w cf. Acts 20. 1.
*x cf.*Acts 19. 21, 22. *cf.* Acts 23. 11. ch. 1.10, 11.
*y cf.*Acts 15. 3. *cf.* 3 John 6, 7; *cf.* Tit. 3. 13.
z cf. Acts 28. 30, 31.

it. But he had written to them in the boldness belonging to his position as apostle of the Gentiles, a position the gift of God's grace alone, to put them in mind of all that was their own. The ministration of the gospel of God was for him in the fruit God gave him of it, a priestly service which presented the Gentiles in whom the Spirit wrought as a sanctified and acceptable offering to Him. The words, in their perfect simplicity and intelligibility, yield no cover to the ritualistic confusion which confounds ministry with priesthood — approach to God with the message of peace and reconciliation for men. Paul does not stand between the Gentiles and God, to offer anything to Him on their behalf, who in the place which Christianity had given them were themselves all a holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), all in equal nearness to Him, through the grace that had brought them nigh. But it was themselves, as the fruit of the work in them of which God had made him the instrument, who became thus an offering—his offering—to God. Thus he had matter of glorying through grace in what God had done through him to make the Gentiles obedient in faith to Christ, God also accompanying his word with signs and wonders, in demonstration of whose work in fact this work of his was. He had not been slothful or negligent either in this joyful work, but from Jerusalem in a wide circuit to Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Here he explains to them what had hindered him, with all this activity, from coming to a place so central and important as Rome was. It had been, he says, his earnest desire to follow the Scripture principle, to bring those to see who had yet had no tidings brought to them, and those understand who never yet had heard. Rome, therefore, with its assembly already gathered, could not

I am going to Jerusalem to [a]minister to the saints. For it hath pleased [b]Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It hath pleased them indeed, and [c]debtors of theirs they are: for if the nations have been made [d]partakers of their spiritual things, they are debtors to minister unto them in carnal things. Having completed this therefore, and sealed to them this fruit, I shall [e]set off, by * you to Spain. And I am conscious that when I come to you, I shall come in the [f]fulness of the blessing of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your [g]prayers to God for me, that I may be [h]delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and my ministry that is for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with [i]joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the [j]God of peace be with you all. Amen.

a *cf.* Acts 24. 17.
b 1 Cor. 16. 1-4. 2 Cor. 8. 1-8. 2 Cor. 9. 2-15.
c *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 11. *cf.* Gal. 2. 10. *cf.* Acts 11. 29, 30.
d *cf.* Jno. 4. 22. *cf.* Acts 8. 14-17.
e *cf.* Prov. 16. 9. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12-20.
f *cf.* ch. 1. 11. *cf.* Eph. 3. 8, 19.
g 1 Thess. 5. 25. Eph. 6. 18, 19. Heb. 13. 18, 19.
h *cf.* Acts 21. 28-35 with Acts 23. 12-35.

* δί ὑμῶν, "by your aid" perhaps.

cf. 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2. *i ctr.* 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21; *cf.* 2 Jno. 4; *cf.* 3 Jno. 4; *cf.* Philem. 20. *j* ch. 16. 20; *cf.* ver. 13.

claim him in view of the unoccupied places round. But now he found no more room, as he counted this, in the regions where he had been, and there was the far western country of Spain beckoning him by its need. Here would be his opportunity to visit by the way those whom he had long desired to see. This he contemplated therefore, but not immediately; for now Jerusalem claimed him, for the ministry of the contribution of the Gentiles to the need of those in whose spiritual blessings they had been made partakers. After this, Rome would come next, on his way to Spain. We have learned elsewhere how differently this was to be fulfilled to him from the way in which he now imagined. The fear of something, however, that might come to him at the hands of the disobedient in Judea, he frankly confesses, asking their prayers for his deliverance, and the accomplishment of his purpose as he had declared it to them. It is at least probable that he may have, after all, gone on to Spain; but there is no Scripture account of it, and no real certainty. There was, as we know, a long and unwilling delay, and years in a Roman prison, whether in Judea or at Rome. Our prayers are often answered in ways we know not, and so it was in this case as to the apostle himself; but who shall say that they were *not* answered? or that they were not answered in a way better in the sight of God—better for the gospel itself, than had all taken place according to his thought? Nor would this be irreconcilable with a certain effect of his own failure at this time to interpret aright his Lord's mind for him. We need not go into this here, but the mistakes of those most earnest and devoted may have, just in this very way, the most important lessons for us. We are to follow no merely human leader without personal exercise, and a grave, wise reserve which the apostle here would be the first to press upon us; "Be ye followers of me," he could say indeed, but not without the reservation implied, if not directly stated, "even as I also am of Christ." How beautiful the prayer with which he closes here,—the more as we think upon the difficulties of the way for him whose the prayer was,—"the God of peace be with you all."

SUBD. 5.

There is no other epistle in which are found so many salutations as in this to the Romans. The wayfarer's epistle, Colossians, comes next, the naturalness

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xvi.)
The close in salutations and warning.

1 (1-16): Individual recognitions.

1. I [k]COMMEND unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a minister* of the assembly which is in Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord in a way [l]worthy of saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever she may have need of you, for she has been also a [m]helper of many, and of myself. Salute [n]Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, (who for my life hazarded their own neck; to whom not I alone give thanks, but all the assemblies of the Gentiles;) the [o]assembly also which is in their house. Salute Epænetus, my beloved, who is the [p]firstfruits of Asia† for Christ. Salute Mary, who [q]labored much for you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and [r]fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles; who also were in Christ [s]before me. Salute Ampliatus, my [t]beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our [u]fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, [v]approved in Christ. Salute those of Aristobulus' [[w]household.] Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute those who are of Narcissus' [household,] who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who [x]labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who labored [y]much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, [z]chosen in the Lord; and his mother and [a]mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus, and Julias, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them. Salute one another with a [b]holy kiss. [c]All the assemblies of Christ salute you.

* "Servant," not necessarily official.
† Some read, "Achaia."

a cf. Tit. 2. 3, 4; *cf.* ver. 2. *b* 1 Cor. 16. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 26; 1 Pet. 5. 14; *ctr.* Prov. 26. 23; *ctr.* Ruth. 1. 14. *c cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17; *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 17.

k cf. 2 Cor. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Acts 18. 27. *cf.* Phil. 2. 29, 30. *l cf.* Eph. 5. 3. *cf.* Phil. 1. 27. *cf.* 3 Jno. 6. *m cf.* Acts 16. 15. *cf.* ver. 23. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 10. *n* Acts 18. 2, 18, 26. 1 Cor. 16. 19. 2 Tim. 4. 19. *o cf.* Col. 4. 15. *cf.* Phile. 2. *cf.* Matt. 18. 20. *p cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 15. *q cf.* ver. 12. *cf.* Phil. 4. 3. *r cf.* Acts 16. 24, 25. *cf.* Col. 4. 10. *cf.* Phile. 23. *s cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 8. *t cf.* Phil. 4. 1. *cf.* Acts 15. 25, 26. *u cf.* Col. 4. 7. *v cf.* ch. 12. 2. *cf.* 3 Jno. 12. *w cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 11, 16. *cf.* Acts 16. 15, 31-34. *x cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 58. *y cf.* Phil. 2. 29, 30. *z cf.* Mk. 15. 21. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 13.

of which we seem to recognize. In Galatians there are none; the controversy cuts off the possibility of the free interchange of human affection, where Christ Himself was now in question. In Romans as yet no controversy has arisen, and the fellowship in Christ has no restraint upon its expression. There are, of course, also, such links as might be expected with the continually shifting population of the imperial city. Could we examine more deeply, we should find, no doubt, that this is not a haphazard collection of names and memories, but that God has so ordered all as to give us instruction from every detail and name recorded. At present we cannot do this; but abundance in the way of proof we have surely had to make it a conviction that He, whose work all Scripture is, has left no part without the perfect elaboration which every thing has to which He has put His hand.

1. First, we have those enumerated whom the apostle thinks worthy of personal recognition, where any special service to the Lord has, as might be expected, its special notice. The claims of kindred, however, are not forgotten, where the higher link created by the Spirit renews and exalts it to an eternal value. But there are others whose names to us are as yet names only,—ciphers to which their connection with Christ gives all the interest; some again whose

2 (17-20): Against the causers of divisions.

2. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark those who [d]create divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and [e]turn away from them. For they that are such [f]serve not our Lord* Christ, but their own belly, and by [g]kind and fair speech deceive the hearts of the guileless. For your [h]obedience hath come abroad unto all. I rejoice therefore with regard to you: but I would have you [i]wise as to that which is good, and simple as to that which is evil. But the God of peace shall [j]bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The [k]grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

3 (21-24): Outflow of heart in salutation.

3. [l]Timotheus my fellow-worker, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who [m]wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius, my [n]host, and of the whole assembly, saluteth you. Erastus, the steward of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus the brother. The [o]grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

d 1 Cor.1.11, 12. 1 Cor. 3. 3. 1 Cor. 11.18 -20.
e cf.Tit.3.10, 11. cf. 2 Thess. 3. 6.
f cf. Phil. 3. 19. cf.2 Cor.11. 13.
g cf. Col.2.4. cf.2 Pet.2.3.
h cf.2 Cor.2. 9.
i cf.Matt.10. 16. cf. Phil. 4. 8, 9.
j cf. Gen. 3. 15. cf. 2 Cor. 2. 11-14.
k 2 Cor. 13. 14, etc.
l 1 Tim. 1. 1, 2, etc. Acts 16. 1. Acts 18. 5. Acts 20. 4.
m cf. 1 Cor. 16. 21; cf. Col. 4. 18; ctr. Gal. 6. 11.
n 1 Cor. 1. 14; Acts 19. 29; Acts 20. 4; 3 Jno. 1.
o ch. 15. 33; ver. 20.

* A few MSS. insert "Jesus."

names are unknown altogether; simply they belonged to such or such a household: all these have undoubtedly just their fit place and mention; but we cannot demonstrate it: how much we have need in every sphere of faith, where our business is to turn it little by little into experimental knowledge. What precious conquests of now well-nigh barren tracts await those who will lay claim, boldly, however humbly, to their large and good land, which unbelief persistently belittles while it looks at it from afar off with its reversed telescope!*

2. Already the apostle has to warn these Roman saints, however, against those who, whether in their midst as yet or not, were certainly at work to bring in divisions and occasions of stumbling amongst those united by the Spirit into one fellowship of love and mutual service. The things warned against were contrary to the doctrine they had learned, whether or not they involved in themselves the introduction of error. But this would be apt to be the case; for there is nothing more ready to come in upon the adoption of carnal ways than perversions of doctrine to cover, if not to justify them. If a man craves the world, is he likely to take honestly the texts that speak of the Christian in his relation to it? As the epistle to the Ephesians reminds us, the eyes are in the heart (i. 18, R. V.); and with an eye that is not single, darkness comes upon the soul; and those self-deceived will become the deceivers of others. The saints are here bidden to mark and turn away from such; which may intimate that the apostle is speaking here of things not come to maturity, or what as yet did not call for or was not ripe for assembly action. But Christ was not served or honored in their ways, but self, whose cravings led them on, and characterized them, for discerning eyes, by the beggar's badge they wore; none the less that they had

* Phœbe means "radiant." "Minister" is *diaconos*, "deacon," but the word is now used too restrictedly. It is, in fact, one of the terms of widest application in this way, as may be seen by comparing some of the passages in which we find it: as chap. xiii. 4; xv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 6; Eph. iii. 7, etc. Prisca means "ancient, venerable;" Aquila, "eagle" (see Notes, p. 121); Epænetus, "worthy of praise;" Mary, "exalted;" Andronicus, "victory of (or over?) men;" Junias (?); Ampliatus, "enlarged;" Urbanus, "man of the city;" Stachys, "ear of corn, plant, scion;" Apelles, "plain (?)"; Aristobulus, "best counselor;" Herodion, (?); Narcissus, "stupefying;" Tryphæna, "delicate (?)"; Tryphosa, "broken off (?)"; Persis, "Persian," or "destruction;" Rufus, "red;" Asyncritus, "incomparable;" Phlegon, "burning;" Hermes, Hermas, "gain (?)"; Patrobas, "a father's step;" Philologus, "fond of learning" or "of argument;" Julia, "of the wheat-sheaf;" Nereus, Olympas, of doubtful signification.

4 (25-27): Frailty in man, and mercy in God.

4. Now* to Him who is able to [p]establish you according to [q]my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the [r]mystery, through the age-times† kept in silence, but now manifested, and by [s]prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God, made known unto all [t]nations for the [u]obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, whom be [v]glory throughout the ages. Amen.

p ch. 1. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 10. *cf.* Eph. 4. 14, 15.
q ch. 2. 16. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 1–4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 1–6. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Eph. 6. 19. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 5-10.
r 1 Cor. 2. 1. *cf.* Eph. 3. 3–11; *cf.* Col. 1. 26, 27; *cf.* Col. 2. 2, 3; *cf.* Col. 4. 3.
s *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16 with 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.
t *cf.* Col. 1. 6.
u *cf.* ch. 1. 5.
v ch. 11. 33-36; *cf.* Eph. 3. 20, 21.

* Some omit these closing verses; some put them at the end of chap. xiv.; a few, in both places.

† Or perhaps more literally, "in eternal ages."

the beggar's wheedling tone, and smooth hypocrisy, calculated to deceive, and which would deceive the unwary. With the Roman Christians there was indeed, as had come abroad and was well known, a readiness of obedience which it gave the apostle joy to recognize; but he would have them wise in it with regard to good, while as to evil simple in rejecting it, without over-occupation with that in which the power of the enemy works to ensnare the mind. The ordinance as to cleansing by the ashes of the heifer has here great practical value for us. Even the clean person, cleansing another with it, became himself unclean until the evening (Num. xix. 21). But there is happy assurance for us: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Peace is what is in God's heart for men; though He who came with the message of it had, because of what the world was, in the meanwhile to bring, not peace, but a sword. The work which wrought it as before God insured the casting out of the enemy; which, if it yet lingers, will have full accomplishment. Even now there are anticipations of it, and victories that presage the end.

3. There follow salutations from those with the apostle, in which the Christian heart, prompted by no special links or remembrances, save only the link of the common Christianity, flows out to those in whom it recognizes this all-sufficient relationship. The name of Tertius as the writer of the epistle shows the general custom of the apostle, most probably from some physical infirmity, such as he elsewhere refers to (2 Cor. xii. 7; Gal iv. 14, 15), to employ another person to act for him in that capacity; while a salutation from his own hand (2 Thess. iii. 17) was the token of genuineness in each epistle.*

4. The epistle ends with an ascription of praise to God as able to establish them according to Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,—according (that is) to the revelation of the mystery hid through the dispensations hitherto, now made known, and by scriptures of prophetic character published to all nations for the obedience of faith. This in its full extent the apostle does not give in Romans. The epistle states the partial blinding of Israel to be a part of it, and with this would be the grafting of Gentile branches on Israel's olive-tree, in full equality with Jews. The body is referred to, but not necessarily as the body of Christ; but in the first epistle to the Corinthians we have the Church both as this, and as the temple of God; though Ephesians and Colossians are needed to complete the revelation. With the fully proved frailty of man, however, even of the saint, only God could be counted on to maintain His people at the height of this. The ages of silence were days of preparation for the full announcement of that in which God's wisdom as well as grace is so wondrously declared. Man had to be shown in them in his true condition, that that grace might remain man's only hope and boast. To Him alone wise will be the glory through Jesus Christ throughout the ages of eternity. Amen.

* The names here are Timotheus, "one that honors God;" Lucius, "luminous;" Jason, "healer;" Sosipater, "preserver of his father;" Tertius, "third;" Gaius, "of earth;" Erastus, "loveable;" Quartus, "fourth."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF GALATIANS

GALATIANS is in character a controversy. In effect it is a buttress to the foundation truths of Romans, yet not stopping where Romans does, but carrying the truth of Christian position further. In Romans we have the man "in Christ," "dead to sin," "dead to the law." In Galatians we have the further truth that he is "crucified to the world," and a "new creation." New creation has been, indeed, implied in Romans, as we have seen through all the latter part, but we have only had at present Christ as the Head of it. Now we have it actually named. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

The controversial character accounts for the historical development which we find so much in Galatians, and for the place in which we find the history. In Romans, for instance, we have the apostle referring to Christ as "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers," but also "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy," and he refers to his own ministry to the Gentiles; but there is no development of all this, nor is it needed, and it comes rather as an appendix to the epistle itself, than as forming any proper part of it. On the other hand, in Galatians, we begin with history,—a history of his own ministry, in which the source and channel of his apostleship and his absolute independence of those who were apostles before him are made apparent. He owes nothing to them. He has from them only a confirmation of the gospel which he preached before, and, in Peter's case, finds it in what, in a certain way, is opposition, although this is a matter of weakness on the part of the Jewish apostle and not of deliberate opposition. All this comes at the beginning necessarily, because the question made of his teaching goes on to question of his ministry altogether, and in order that he may be listened to, he has to put this upon the most positive ground. This occupies the first two chapters. We have then what is more doctrinal, the contrast between faith and law, but even here the argument is in method historical. We have, for instance, the priority of God's promise to Abraham and of the principle of faith established in it as 430 years before the law; with the consequence of this that the law could add nothing, coming where it does, to the unconditional promise. The opposition of principle is also given to us, its attitude toward man such

that Christ has to bear the curse for him in order that the blessing promised him may come. If the law comes so late, also, there is seen in this very thing that it is not other than, as the apostle has already said in Romans, a thing coming in by the way. God has not put the whole world under the school-master, nor men at all from the beginning of the world. It was added "for the sake of transgressions," as the verse really says; that is, to *have* them; not to have *sin*, but, as we have seen already, to turn sin into transgression, so to make it manifest, and in its exceeding sinfulness as against the authority of God Himself. Thus, of necessity, we find the limit of the law also, when God takes up openly faith as His principle; the purpose for which the law came, (that is, to shut man up to faith,) is accomplished, and we are no longer under a school-master.

In the third place, the apostle dwells upon that which is the characteristic of Christianity now, and which the law never gave, the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, "Abba Father." The law brought distance. Here is nearness of the most endeared kind, and he can bring the law itself as typically, but none the less really, teaching the bringing forth to bondage which characterized the children of law, the seed according to the flesh; in contrast with the freedom of those who are children of the free woman and themselves free. Here too is history: even the gift of the Spirit is that; especially as marked openly by the signs which we know accompanied this, public as they were; and so the story of Abraham's children, however much the use of this is allegorical.

This mode of argument is strikingly different from Romans, where the appeal is rather to the conscience. History, as God's writing broadly on the face of the world, is evidently more adapted to the conviction of the Galatians, now giving up so much of what He had witnessed to their consciences, and who are made to face a witness which they cannot gainsay or mistake. The arrangement of every detail here is nothing short of divine; and they must face God about it.

Finally, we have in Galatians, the practical test as to the working of the two principles in opposition—law and grace. The Galatians themselves are a sample of it. They had found in the gospel a happiness which made them ready to give their very eyes to the man who had ministered it to them. Now they have taken up the law to perfect according to the flesh what had been begun in the power of the Spirit: as a consequence they were biting and devouring one another. The effect of law was being made manifest. He closes with the declaration of the perfect rule for a Christian, the man in Christ, as belonging to

the new creation, neither to walk, therefore, as the Gentile, in lawlessness, nor in legality, as the Jew. His whole standpoint, as shown in the unique character of the gospel which he brings, is outside the world, outside, therefore, all that to which the law applied. The veil is rent and Christ in heaven is once more seen as both the rule and power of the new activity.

The divisions are, therefore:

1. (Chaps. i. and ii.) Paul's gospel as unique in source and power.
2. (Chap. iii.) The contrast of law with faith.
3. (Chaps. iv.–v. 6.) The meaning of the Spirit of adoption having come.
4. (Chaps. v. 7–vi. 18.) The practical test.

THE EPISTLE TO THE
GALATIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i., ii.)

Paul's Gospel unique in Source and Power.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

His entire independence of man in it.

1 (1-5): An apostle not from men, nor through man, but from God alone.

1. PAUL, an apostle, not from [a]men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who [b]raised him from among the dead, and all the [c]brethren with me, to the [d]assemblies of Galatia: [e]grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who [f]gave himself for our sins, that he might [g]deliver us from the present evil age, according to the [h]will of our God and Father: to whom be [i]glory throughout the ages of ages: Amen.

a *ctr.* Jer. 14. 14. *cf.* Jer. 1.9. *cf.* Acts 1. 15, etc.
b *cf.* Rom.1. 4, 5. *cf.*1 Cor.15. 4, 8-12.
c *cf.* 1 Cor.1. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 1. *cf.* Acts 15. 22, 23.
d 1 Cor.16.1. *cf.* Acts 16. 6.
e 1 Cor. 1. 3, etc.
f ch. 2. 20. 1 Cor. 15.3. 1 Pet. 2. 24.
g *cf.* ch.6.14. *cf.*Rom.12. 2. *cf.*Col.2.20.
h *cf.* Jno. 6. 38-40. *cf.* Jno. 10. 28-30. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 15-17.
i Phil. 4. 20. Eph. 3. 20, 21.

NOTES.

DIV. 1.

THE Galatians show us, in a pregnant example, how little man can be trusted to hold the blessing that he has. If, in fact, its continuance to him depended upon this, how hopeless would be the case; but our blessings are in Christ, held fast there by divine grace for us, and thus it is alone that they could avail us.

The Galatians had received the gospel with joy and thankfulness, yet now seemed ready to surrender it, no doubt without proper realization that they were doing so. They were simply adding the law to it, but, as the apostle shows them, this would be, in fact, to surrender it altogether. He writes with earnestness as always, but with a sharpness which was not characteristic of him. He salutes no one in the letter. He starts at once with his theme, wishing them, indeed, "grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ," but not even addressing them as the church of God, but simply as the "churches" (or assemblies) "of Galatia." He is, as he says, "in doubt about them." He has "to travail in birth again until Christ be formed" in them. Thus, they are for him assemblies which have afresh to prove their right to be called Christian assemblies. Their doctrinal wanderings he treats more seriously than that moral evil which we find at Corinth, and which strikes men naturally as being of a far worse character; but without the gospel, morality cannot maintain itself, and in the doctrine of Christ is the root of all morality. Thus he is as strong and peremptory as possible, pronouncing a curse upon himself or an angel from heaven, if it were possible for such to preach any different gospel from that he had preached to them.

1. He begins at once declaring the unique character of his ministry. He affirms his apostleship in the fullest manner, as "not of men," (derived from them as its source,) "nor through man" as the channel of its conveyance; but alone "through Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead." He is sent by the risen Christ, as we know, and not simply by Christ risen, but by One whom he sees for the first time in the glory of God in heaven. This charac-

2 (6-10): A different gospel, not another.

2. I marvel that ye are thus quickly [j]changing from him who called you in the power of the grace of Christ, unto a different* gospel, which is [k]not another:* only there are some who are [l]troubling you, and would [m]pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an [n]angel from heaven preach† unto you any other gospel than that we have preached† unto you, let him be [o]anathema. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any man preacheth† unto you any other gospel than that ye did [p]receive, let him be anathema. For do I now make‡ friends of men, or God? or am I seeking to [q]please men? If I were yet pleasing men, I should not be the [r]bondman of Christ.

3 (11, 12): The preaching of a revelation.

3. For I declare to you, brethren, regarding the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man. For I neither [s]received it from man, nor was I taught it, but by the [t]revelation of Jesus Christ.

* These are two words in the original. † Literally, "evangelize."
‡ Literally, "persuade," or "satisfy."

j *cf.* Ex. 32. 7, 8. *cf.* Judg. 2. 17. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4. *cf.* ch. 5. 7.
k *cf.* Jno. 10. 7–15. *cf.* Acts 4. 12.
l *cf.* ch. 5. 10, 12. *cf.* Gen. 26. 15. *cf.* Acts 15. 24. *cf.* Tit. 1. 10, 11.
m *cf.* Matt. 13. 33. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14.
n *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 18. *cf.* Rom. 8. 38.
o 1 Cor. 16. 22.
p *cf.* ch. 3. 1–5 with ch. 5. 10.
q 1 Thess. 2. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5.
r *cf.* Rom. 1. 1 with Jonah 3. 2.
s 1 Cor. 11. 23; 1 Cor. 15. 3; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 2.
t ver. 16; Acts 9. 3–5, 17–20.

ter of his ministry marks his whole teaching here. He adds as confirmation of what he is saying, that all the brethren are with him in what he writes. This defection of the Galatians was, as he will show more perfectly, in fact, from the faith held by all. He adds that "Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." The age, as we have seen, is the *time*-world, characterized by its opposition to God. The true Prince of the world has been crucified and cast out; the "god of this age" is Satan, but we are thus at once outside the world, —outside the whole region to which the law applies, as is evident. The Father's will is our deliverance from it.

2. He begins at once, his heart full, to express his wonderment, knowing what he had known of how divine grace had wrought in them, that they were so soon being removed from Him who had called them unto the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. They had had in themselves, surely, the evidence that this call was of God. Blessing and power had not lacked. The gospel to which now they were listening was not *another* gospel, for there was no other. It was no true gospel, though it might bear the name of that. It was only the effort of some who were troubling them and who wished to pervert the gospel of Christ. Immediately he denounces them with the utmost severity; but it is love that speaks in the severity itself. If it were himself or "an angel from heaven who preached any other gospel than that which had been preached to them," (and he repeats this lest they should think that it was an ill-considered outburst)—if any one "preached any other gospel than that," not merely which had been preached to them, but "which they had *received*" also, "let him be accursed." He was not, he adds, concerned about conciliating men in saying this. It was for God he spoke, as desiring to have Him upon his side, not seeking to please men; for to be a man-pleaser and a servant of Christ would be in total contradiction.

3. He goes on now to show how he had himself learned this gospel. He had not learned it of men, he had not preached it as being educated in any human school. He had been taught it by one thing alone, the marvelous revelation of Christ to him. It was this which changed him from an enemy and a persecutor to the ardent and self-sacrificing disciple of Christ. The Galatians were listening to human teachers, though, as he has already intimated, they had, in fact,

4 (13-24): His change and surrender of flesh and blood.

4. For ye have [u]heard of my manner of life once in the Jews'* religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and ravaged it: and [v]advanced in the Jews'* religion beyond many my contemporaries in my nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good [w]pleasure of God,† who set me [x]apart, [even] from my mother's womb, and [y]called me through his grace, to reveal his Son [z]in me, that I [a]might preach the good news as to him among the nations, immediately I [b]conferred not with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before me, but I went [c]away into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I [d]went up to Jerusalem, to become acquainted with Cephas,‡ and remained with him fifteen days; but other of the apostles I saw none, save James the [e]brother of the Lord. Now touching the things that I write unto you, behold, before God I lie not. Then I came into the [f]regions of

* "Judaism." † Some leave out "God." ‡ Many read, "Peter."

u Acts 26. 4, 5. Acts 9. 1-3
v *cf.* Phil. 3. 5, 6.
w *cf.* Eph. 1. 5. *cf.* Matt. 11. 26.
x *cf.* Jer. 1. 4. *cf.* Lk. 1. 15.
y *cf.* ver. 6. *cf.* Rom. 8. 30. *cf.* Acts 9. 4.
z *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 18. *cf.* Phil 3. 8.
a Acts 9. 15. ch. 2. 7-9.
b ver. 1. *cf.* Acts 9. 20.
c *cf.* Ex. 3. 1. *cf.* 1 Sa. 17. 15. *cf.* Gen. 39. 20 23.
d *cf.* Acts 9. 26.
e *cf.* Matt. 12. 46. f *cf.* Acts 9. 30 with Acts 11. 25.

had the gospel which they had received, confirmed to them by the internal evidence as to its character, and the joy and power with which God had accompanied it.

4. He goes now into the circumstances of his conversion. He knew all about this Judaism which they were getting back into. He did not speak as one who had been a stranger to it. On the contrary, he had made the very greatest advances,— was an enthusiast for the law, beyond those of his own nation amongst whom he was, and, as an evidence of this he was beyond them all in persecuting the Church of God and wasting it. How the essential opposition of principles comes out here! Here it was only the human school that he was following; the traditions of his fathers, with all their appeal to nature and self-interest, stirred up his zeal; but God had better purposes for him, God, who had separated him from his mother's womb, and now called him by His grace. His Son was revealed, not merely *to* him, objectively, but *in* him, to be henceforth the one abiding power and reality for his soul; and the spell of his traditional religion which had set him in opposition to the Christ of God, collapsed in that moment.

He was thus the suited preacher for the Gentiles, just as himself no Gentile, but a Jew in fullest reality of zealous legalism. If he gave this up, he gave it up as fully knowing it, as realizing in himself its contrariety to the grace which God had shown him. In the consciousness of this divine call, he now conferred not with flesh and blood, and not even with those who were apostles before him. God had, in his case, broken through all semblance even of apostolic succession, so dear to many since. On the contrary, having received this revelation, he went off into Arabia, into the desert, and returned once more, from such a school as Moses learned in, to the place to which he had come to persecute this faith which he now was preaching. By and by he did indeed go up to Jerusalem "to see Peter; but abode with him only fifteen days, and other of the apostles saw none except James, the Lord's brother." Again he went off into regions far apart, and the churches of Judea which were in Christ did not know him even by face. They had simply heard that the persecutor preached now what he had been persecuting, and they glorified God in him.

As we think upon this history in its connection with what we have already

Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea which were in Christ; but they had only [g]heard [say], He that persecuted us once now preacheth* the faith which once he ravaged; and they [h]glorified God in me.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Confirmation, spite of opposition.

1 (1-10): Acknowledgment of the grace given.

1. THEN after a lapse of [i]fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking [j]Titus also with me. And I went up according to [k]revelation, and laid before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but [l]privately before those conspicuous [among them], lest in any way I were running, or had run in [m]vain. But neither was Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, [n]compelled to be circumcised; and that on account of [o]false brethren privily brought in,

* "Evangelizes."

[g] *cf.* Acts 9. 21, 27, 28.
[h] *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12-17. *cf.* Acts 11. 18.
[i] Acts 15. 1, 2, etc,
[j] Tit. 1. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 16, 23.
[k] *cf.* Acts 16. 9.
[l] *cf.* Acts 21. 18-22. *cf.* Prov. 25. 9.
[m] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 16.
[n] *cf.* Acts 16. 1-3. *cf.* ch. 5. 2, 3.
[o] Acts 15. 24. 2 Cor. 11 26. *cf.* Jude 4.

seen as to the character of Christianity, it is plain how fully the prophetic character is manifested in it as characteristic of its ministry. The prophet is one brought near to God, to learn His mind in His presence, and is sent forth from God, responsible to Him alone in the message intrusted to him, to declare that mind. The *priesthood* in Israel was successional; but, as a consequence, in fact, of this, the succession guaranteed to it no true spiritual character whatever. The priesthood might, and did as we know, go far astray from God. Still the priest was the priest, and to be owned as that until God were pleased to set him aside; but the prophet even in Israel was a totally different person. Receiving his call in the most distinct way possible from God Himself, his spiritual character was vouched for by this independent call of God. He who sent him was responsible for him. Acquaintance with God was what marked him. He was characteristically the "man of God"; and as such stood forth for God, as we see in the history, in the times of deepest defection and apostasy, with his message of recall or of warning and judgment. This is, in fact, the character of all New Testament ministry. There is no official standing anywhere, to be revered *whatever the life may be.* The message from God is the whole matter; and the life if not with God would forfeit at once the claim to reality in the message. The gift is from God alone, bringing its responsibility with it. To accept man's authorization of it would only be dishonor to the glorious Giver.

SUBD. 2.

The apostle goes on now to the history of his after-communications with those who were apostles before him, and to show that while they added nothing to him in the matter of testimony, they themselves did in the fullest way confirm the reality of that apostleship which he independently received.

1. He did not go up again to Jerusalem till fourteen years had elapsed, during which much work had been done amongst the Gentiles, and Titus accompanying himself and Barnabas was the fruit of that work. The time at which he went up was that when there had been raised at Antioch itself a question of the character of this new gospel to the Gentiles. We have had the history of it already in the fifteenth of Acts. Paul and Barnabas, as we find there, were sent with the full concurrence of the brethren at Antioch, to settle once for all this matter which was agitating them; but, as he tells us here, even in this case, he did not go up as yielding merely to the solicitation of others, but by express revelation from God. The time had come, in fact, when if there was not to be an open breach, there must be the manifestation of an agreement be-

who came in privily to spy out our [p]liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we [q]gave place in subjection, not even for an hour, that the [r]truth of the gospel might continue with you. And of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me,—God [s]accepteth not the person of man) they, I say, who seemed to be somewhat [t]imparted nothing to me; but on the contrary, seeing that the gospel of the [u]uncircumcision was entrusted to me, even as that of the [v]circumcision was to Peter (for [w]he who wrought in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision wrought also in me toward the Gentiles), and when they perceived the grace given unto me, [x]James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the [y]right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision. Only [they would] that we should [z]remember the poor; which same thing I also was earnest to do.

2 (11-21): Peter's contradiction.

2. But when Peter* came to [a]Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be condemned. For be-

p ch. 5.1, 13. *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 19, etc.
q *cf.* ver. 11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7. *cf.* Jude. 3.
r ver. 14. *cf.* Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Tit. 1.14.
s Rom. 2.11. Acts 10. 34. Deut. 10.17.
t *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 11, 12.
u Acts 22. 21. *cf.* Rom. 11. 13.
v *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.
w *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 5-9. *cf.* Col. 1. 29.
x Acts 15. 13, etc. Acts 12. 17. *cf.* ch. 1. 19. *cf.* Jas. 1. 1.
y *cf.* 3 Jno. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 13. 3.

* Perhaps we should read, "Cephas."

ctr. 3 Jno. 10, 11; *ctr.* Rom. 16. 17. *z cf.* Acts 6. 1, etc; *cf.* Acts 11. 27-30; *cf.* Acts 24. 17; *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 1-3. *a cf.* Acts 11. 19-26; *cf.* Acts 15. 1.

tween those who were the leaders at Jerusalem, the central place for Judaism, and those who were preaching the new gospel. He went up accordingly and communicated to them the gospel that he was preaching; first of all, (on account of the height to which the opposition ran,) "privately to those who were of reputation," lest the outbreak of the legalism which was carrying the multitude should work disaster among those who had been gathered out among the Gentiles. This is what he means evidently by saying that he did this, "lest he should run or had run in vain." There was no yielding to the opposition in the slightest degree. Titus was with him, a Greek, yet in fullest Christian fellowship, and without being circumcised. Already he speaks of false brethren who had been unawares brought in, who were seeking to bring into bondage Christ's free men. Christianity, in fact, at Jerusalem was at present so little more than a Jewish sect that we can readily understand how open would be the door for men of this class to flock into it. The apostle withstands them, not giving place, as he says "for an hour." It might seem to others to be a small matter, that for which he was contending. With him it involved the whole truth of the gospel. The success was manifest. In conference he found that "those who seemed to be somewhat" had nothing to communicate to him; but, on the other hand, recognized that to him God had, in fact, committed the gospel of the uncircumcision just as truly as to Peter he had given that of the circumcision. The same mighty power in signs and wonders accompanied his work amongst the Gentiles as that which had manifested itself in Peter among the circumcision; and those who seemed to be pillars, (whom he now names, as James, Cephas and John,) perceived the grace that was given to him. They gave then to him and to Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship"; not simply as Christian brethren, but that they should go to the Gentiles, as they themselves remained as ministers to the circumcision. They only stipulate that the poor should be remembered; a testimony, as it seems, as to the character of those who were being reached by the gospel in Israel; and we find, accordingly, Paul zealous afterwards to bring to these the offerings of the Gentiles.

fore that certain came from James, he [b]ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and [c]separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the [d]rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him, so that even [e]Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter* [f]before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as† do the nations, and not as† do the Jews, [g]how compellest thou the nations to be as‡ Jews?

* Perhaps, "Cephas." † These clauses are expressed by a single adverb, "Gentilely" and "Jewishly." ‡ Literally, "Judaize."

b *cf.* Acts 11. 2, 3, etc.
c *cf.* Gen. 12. 11-13. *cf.* Prov. 29. 25.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6.
e *ctr.* Acts 11. 22-24. *ctr.* Acts 13. 46. *cf.* Acts 15. 37-39.
f *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 20.
g *cf.* Prov. 11. 1. *cf.* Rom. 2. 21; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 11. 1.

2. Such then had been the confirmation given him; but he now goes further and shows that upon an after occasion at Antioch, he had had to withstand Peter himself and that as blameworthy. He had been with them in the unrestricted liberty of Christianity, eating with the Gentiles. A change was induced by the coming of some from James. We see how firmly the Judaizing character still remained with many of these. And when they were come, Peter withdrew and separated himself, not from any conviction of error on his part, but simply as giving way, as Paul had not given way, to the opposition which he feared. Such an example in such a place soon worked disastrously. The other Jews, apparently the mass of those there, dissembled likewise with him. It was not, as we see again, conviction, but retrograde movement in spite of their convictions; and this went so far that Barnabas, the companion of Paul himself, was carried away with this dissimulation. The power of God to resist this movement was found with Paul alone. He saw that they "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel;" and singling out Peter, not now for private conference, but in the presence of them all, (for Peter needed not to be convinced but convicted,) he said to him: "If thou being a Jew livest after the manner of Gentiles," as he had been doing, "and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou now the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Necessarily they were doing that if they were making circumcision a necessity for the Jews to have fellowship with them. He appeals to the character of Judaism in itself in opposition to this. What had they themselves who were Jews by nature done with regard to this? They were not sinners of the Gentiles, yet—he could speak for himself fully, as we know, as the most zealous of law-keepers,—yet they knew that a man was not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. They had given up, therefore, the one for the other. They had believed in Christ to be justified by the faith of Christ; because by the works of the law could no flesh be justified. Judaism had thus been given up: for men could not take up the law as they pleased, as a rule of life, as people say sometimes, but not as a rule of judgment. They had to take it for that for which God gave it, and a rule of judgment it necessarily was if it was to answer the purpose for which He gave it. If then they had renounced the law in order to be justified by Christ, and had found justification in this way, could it at the same time be sin to renounce it; and had Christ become the minister of sin in this matter of their justification? To build again the things destroyed was to make themselves transgressors in having destroyed them. The law either existed for them or it did not exist. We see that he goes much further than applying it or not to Gentiles; and carries to its full result the principle of the decision at Jerusalem, which went beyond the decision itself. He himself through the law had become dead to the law, and that he might *live to God.* The whole Christian life, therefore, was involved in this. The epistle to the Romans has made us fully acquainted with the argument here. The law itself, through Christ bearing its penalty for them, had, as it were, affirmed their

We, by [h]nature Jews, and not [i]sinners of the nations, but* knowing that a man is [j]not justified by works of law, but only by the [k]faith of Jesus Christ, even we have [l]believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be [m]justified by the faith of Christ, and [n]not by works of law: because [o]by works of law shall no flesh be justified. Now if in seeking to be justified [p]in Christ, we also have been found [q]sinners, is Christ then the [r]minister of sin? Far be the thought. For if the things which I [s]threw down, these I [t]build again, I constitute myself a [u]transgressor. For I [v]through the law [w]died to the law, that I might [x]live unto God. I am [y]crucified with Christ; but I [z]live, no [a]longer I, but [b]Christ liveth in me; and as to [c]that which I now live in the flesh, I live in the [d]faith which is of the [e]Son of God, who [f]loved me, and [g]gave himself for me. I do not [h]set aside the grace of God: for if [i]righteousness be through law, then Christ hath died in [j]vain.

h Phil. 3. 5.
i cf. Eph. 2. 11, 12. cf. Matt. 15. 26.
j Rom. 3. 20. cf. Acts 13. 39. ch. 3. 11.
k Rom. 5. 1.
l cf. Acts 15. 9. cf. Acts 16. 31.
m Rom. 3. 28.
n Rom. 4. 4, 5. cf. Rom. 11. 6.
o cf. Job. 9. 2, 3. cf. Ps. 143 2. cf. Ex. 34. 7.
p cf. Rom. 8. 1. cf. ch. 5. 6.
q cf. ver. 18 with ver. 12. cf. Acts 21.

* Some MSS. omit "but."

20-24. r Rom. 6. 1. s cf. ch. 6. 14; cf. Phil. 3. 7, 8. t cf. ch. 5. 2-4; cf. ch. 4. 10, 11. u ver. 17; cf. ch. 4. 8, 9. v cf. Rom. 3. 19, 20 with Rom. 7. 8-11; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 56. w cf. Rom. 7. 4. x cf. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15; cf. Rom. 14. 7, 8. y ch. 6. 14; cf. Col. 2. 11, 12, 20; cf. Col. 3. 3; cf. Rom. 6. 4-7; cj. Josh. 4. 9. z cf. Col. 3. 1; cf. Rom. 6. 8-11; cf. Eph. 2. 5, 6; cf. Josh. 4. 3. a cf. Rom. 6. 6. cf. Eph. 4. 22-24; cf. Col. 3. 9, 10. b cf. Col. 1. 27; cf. Eph. 3. 17; cf. Josh. 5. 13-15. c cf. Phil. 1. 21. d 2 Cor. 5. 7; cf. Heb. 12. 2. e cf. Acts 9. 20. f cf. Eph. 5. 25; cf. 1 Tim. 1. 14. g ch. 1. 4; cf. Jno. 10. 15. h cf. Rom. 11. 6; cf. vers. 17, 18; cf. ch. 5. 2-4. i cf. Rom. 3. 21; cf. ch. 3. 21. j cf. ch. 3. 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 17; ch. 5. 2.

death to it. He was crucified with Christ, with Him who, as he says afterwards, had borne the curse of the law, its extremest penalty, beyond which it had no claim at all. Thus he was free. Dead with Christ, it was to live, and he lived; yet not, so to speak, himself. The Christ who had been upon the cross for him, who was now in heaven, had won him for Himself, that Christ who henceforth in the glorious reality of what he saw Him to be, lived in him. It was more than Christ being his life: Christ was his true self, the aim and object of his life from henceforth; for the life which he lived in the flesh, he lived now in the faith of the Son of God who, in the wonder of His perfect grace, had loved and given Himself for him. Would they put Christ under the law also? Alas, some would and do even to-day. For the apostle, it was far otherwise. The law, if it remained now for him, would be simply the destruction of all the value of Christ's death for him. If righteousness came by the law, that death of Christ was null and void. Thus it is plain that the question of the law as a possible rule of life for the Christian is settled by the apostle's words here. God never made it that. It is manifest that even as a rule, if it were,—nay, just because it was—the perfect rule for the Jew, if the Christian be anything different, anything higher than a Jew, the Jew's rule could not give to his walk its Christian character. Instead of being too high for Christian attainment as a standard, it is all too low. In fact, there is nothing of the heavenly side of Christianity expressed in the law at all. It is the man in the flesh over whom the law has dominion; and, as we have seen elsewhere, the sphere of law is thus altogether this side of death, and not beyond it. The Christian is, through grace, beyond it. Death and judgment are behind him, not before him. He belongs to another sphere; and though upon earth, he is, nevertheless, the man in Christ, to live and walk as that. It is plain that Peter, in pursuing the course he did, had no thought whatever to be in conflict with the truth of justification before God. He simply adopted the law for the moment as a rule of life, but the apostle makes it a question of the whole gospel. He has no thought of the possibility of its being a mere rule of con-

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii.)

The Contrast between Law and Faith.

1 (1-9): The promise to Abraham gives priority to faith.

1. O [k]SENSELESS Galatians, who hath [l]bewitched you? * to whom as before your [m]eyes Jesus Christ hath been openly set forth, crucified? † This only would I learn of you, Received ye the [n]Spirit by [o]works of law, or by the [p]hearing of faith? Are ye so senseless? having [q]begun in the Spirit, are ye now being [r]perfected in flesh? Have ye [s]suffered so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore who [t]ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh [u]miracles among you, [doeth he it] by works of law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham [v]believed God,

* Some add, "that ye should not obey the truth."
† Some add, "among you."

r cf. Phil. 3. 12. *s cf.* Heb. 10. 32-36; *cf.* Acts 14. 22. *t cf.* Acts 9. 17; *cf.* Acts 10. 44. *u* 1 Cor. 12. 10; *cf.* Acts 14. 3. *v* Gen. 15. 6.

k cf. Lk. 24. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15 36. ver. 3.
l cf. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Acts 8. 9-11.
m cf. 2 Cor. 3. 12-18. *cf.* Jno. 3. 14, 15.
n cf. Eph. 1. 13. *cf.* Acts 15. 8, 9. ver. 14.
o vers. 5, 10. ch. 2. 16.
p cf. Rom. 10. 17.
q cf. ch. 5. 7. *ctr.* Col. 2. 6, 7.

duct. God meant it to raise the question of righteousness before Him. "The man that doeth these things shall live by them" was, in regard to it, the whole matter.

DIV. 2.

Paul comes now, at once, to the question of doctrine, but, as has already been said, he takes it up in a way in which we have not seen it in Romans. His historical treatment of it was indeed the plainest possible argument that he could use for those whose eyes were as dull as those of the Galatians had got to be. The broad facts of the history were there and none could deny them. God had given the promise to Abraham, a simple, unconditional promise, in which He had pledged His whole truthfulness to fulfil His word, long before the law was given at all. The argument at once brings in the authority of God Himself to settle the question.

1. He appeals to them, however, in the first place, as having received that Spirit of Christ which was the distinctive feature of Christianity. It was nothing less than a bewitchment for them now not to obey the truth, when Christ Himself—Christ crucified, as announced in the gospel, yet in the power of His grace—had been received in faith and owned by them. It was in consequence of their reception of Him that the Spirit was given. Manifestly through all the dispensation of law there was nothing like this. There was no Spirit of adoption. It had never come to any by the works of the law. It now came in universally as the result of the hearing of faith. As has often been said, if it were declared in the Old Testament that God was a Father to Israel, this was the very opposite of owning as His family those who were truly His children—for all were not of the true Israel even, that were Israelites. It was a nation in the flesh that God had been pleased to take up, and to put them in a certain relation to Himself; not in that spiritual relation which Christianity implied, for as to any of this people of God, there was no settlement of the eternal question. They might drop out of this place into hell. There was no security as to those in mere Judaism. Thus the Galatians had experience of the power of the gospel and of its being a power which the Jew, as such, knew nothing of. They had suffered, too, for the gospel, as the apostle implies. Was it all a mistake? Had it been in vain? The Spirit was "ministered" manifestly through those who preached the gospel to them; and who preached, as would ordinarily be the case then, with accompanying signs and wonders on God's part, in witness to His word Was it by the works of the law (according to that principle) that these things were wrought, or according to the opposite manner of the hearing of faith? The law said *doing*, not hearing. The gospel said *hearing*, not doing.

and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they that are of faith, these are [w]sons of Abraham. And the scripture [x]foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, foreannounced the [y]gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So that they that are of [z]faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

2 (10-12): The contrary principle and effect of law.

2. For as [a]many as are of the works of the law are under curse: for it is [b]written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that [c]no one is justified by the law with God, is manifest: for, [d]the just shall live by faith; but the [e]law is not of faith, but, he* who hath [f]done them shall live in them.

w *ctr.* Matt. 3. 9. *cf.* Rom. 4. 11. *cf.* Jno. 8. 39. *cf.* Heb. 11. 8, etc.
x *cf.* ver. 22.
y Gen. 12. 3.
z *cf.* Rom. 9. 7 with 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.
a *cf.* Rom. 4. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 6.
b Deut. 27. 26.
c Rom. 3. 20. *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.
d Rom 1. 17. Heb. 10. 38. Hab. 2. 4.

* Some read, "The man."

e *cf.* Rom. 9. 31, 32. f Lev. 18. 5; *cf.* Ezek. 18. 4-9.

But in this Christianity only went back to the pattern of the one whom God had, in His wisdom, set in an unmistakable place in connection with the Jew himself. Abraham was the one through whom they expected all their blessing; but Abraham, as the record was, "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." In his case there were no works of the law, when the law as yet did not exist. If then in him faith was reckoned for righteousness,—if in him, God, having found no righteousness in man, took up the principle of faith for righteousness, it is evident that those who were truly his children would be accepted according to that principle. They which were of faith would be the children of Abraham. The Scripture then had expressly anticipated the justification of the nations through faith. It had preached, as it were, the gospel unto Abraham in the announcement that in him all the nations should be blessed. "In him" could not mean because of his merit, as the Jew perhaps was ready to aver; for as to him all merit had been disclaimed: but, on the contrary, that the nations should be blessed on that principle of faith which God had brought to the front, and acknowledged with regard to Abraham. They which were of faith, therefore, would be blessed with believing Abraham.

2. Now, to this the law could not be added. It was, as we have seen again and again, precisely the reverse of this principle. In faith there is the renouncing of self, the turning to Another on that account. On the other hand, in the law, no question of Another comes in at all. It is "*the man that doeth* them shall live by them"; but then, alas, that means curse, and curse only. As many as were of the works of the law, (as many as were on that principle), were under the curse; not that law works were bad works; clearly, the very reverse; but it was written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." That is the principle as announced by the apostle, when yet Christianity had come. He certainly knew what he was speaking of. He certainly did not believe that Christianity had modified this in any measure, so as to make a certain amount of legal works acceptable to God. The law said "all things," and the apostle says after it, "all things." No one has title to alter this in the least. But then the curse was as manifestly on every one; and how blessed, therefore, the grace which had declared in the Old Testament itself the opposite principle, when it was said by the prophet that "the just shall live by faith." That was the plain renunciation of the law for justification in the sight of God, for "the law is not of faith," as we have seen. It is the man that doeth them: it is not the work of Another, it is the man's own work by which he is to live. Christ, therefore is out of question here. If we will be justified upon the principle of the law, we must give up Christ.

3 (13, 14): Christ under the curse, for the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit.

3. Christ hath [g]redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a [h]curse for us, (for it is [i]written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,) that the [j]blessing of Abraham might come unto the [k]nations in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the [l]promise of the Spirit through faith.

g *cf.* Gen. 8. 21. *cf.* ch. 4. 5. *cf.* Eph. 1. 7.
h *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *cf.* Heb. 13. 11, 12 with Lev. 16. 27. *cf.* Matt. 27. 46.
i Deut. 21. 23; *cf.* 2 Sa. 21. 9; *ctr.* Jno. 12. 32. j ver. 8; *cf.* Rom. 4. 2-5. k *cf.* Rom. 3. 29, 30. l *cf.* Eph. 1. 13 with Lk. 24. 49.

3. But, in fact, redemption has come for us. We were, says the apostle, hopelessly under the curse of the law. That was all that it could do for us, and when Christ came, instead of there being any relinquishment of this, on the contrary, He Himself had to redeem us from the curse of the law as made Himself that curse. A strange way this may seem to be expressed in, indeed, "for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree." One would say that the mere hanging upon a tree could neither in itself be the curse, the true curse upon sin, nor, on the other hand, mark out, of necessity, those who were under the curse. It was, as we should say a thing apparently perfectly arbitrary. An innocent man might hang upon a tree, just as a man steeped in guilt to the uttermost might never hang there. Why is it then that the law expresses itself after this manner? And here we must move carefully, for mistakes have been made on different sides as to this. We have to remember that, while in itself the law was a system of earthly government, though of divine appointment, on the other hand, in its purport spiritually it went beyond this altogether. As an earthly government—the government of an earthly people—it did not in its rewards or penal sanction go beyond the earth. It never said of the keeper of its commandments, "He shall go to heaven;" nor of the convicted sinner, "He shall go to hell."* This has been often spoken of, yet needs to be fully understood; for if it is not, confusion must result. God meant that the conviction of man by it should be fully accomplished, and therefore put both penalty and reward in a sphere cognizable by him, and not in an eternity as to which he can speculate as he pleases. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "the man that doeth them shall live by them," were meant to speak plainly in the common language of men; and thus speaking, the issue of the law is as plain and intelligible as its power to convict is absolutely undeniable.

The shadow of man's condemnation by it must darken the prospect beyond death; while yet God has not tied Himself to the legal judgment. If He had, there would be no hope for any. But the curse attached to hanging upon a tree is not of necessity an eternal one. Yet if there be no way of escape it will be that for all. He who bore it for others rose out of it by His own perfection (Heb. v. 7), as those for whom He bore it by that vicarious work on their behalf.

The Cross marked the character of that work as death in its full penal character, and therefore the forsaking of God; and that which for others might lose its deepest meaning, for the sacrificial victim had all its significance. An ass might be redeemed with a lamb; but the lamb devoted could not be redeemed (Lev. xxvii. 10). Is it not plain that prophetically this hanging on a tree points out the One who was indeed to be under the curse from God, and that the law waited, as it were, through all the centuries of its existence until it found finally its satisfaction in that one wonderful fulfilment, the cross of Christ? Thus alone could the blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles; for if the Gentiles were not, in fact, under the law, (as dispensationally they were not,) yet sin must, of necessity, have the same shadow of the curse following it ever. Gentile or Jew, it could make no difference before God, and, in fact, that form which the law gave to the curse could only be the figure of a deeper thing. The blessing of Abraham could not come upon the Gentiles themselves except as that curse was

* It must be remembered that the Old Testament "hell" is "Sheol," which is hades, the place of the dead

4 (15 18): Impotence of the law to annul the promise.

4. Brethren, I [m]speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, [if] confirmed, no man [n]setteth it aside, or [o]addeth dispositions. Now to [p]Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, Unto [q]seeds, as of many; but as of [r]one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, A covenant confirmed [s]before by God [to Christ],* the law, which came [t]four hundred and thirty years after, doth not [u]annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. For [v]if the inheritance be of law, it is no longer of promise; but God [w]gave it in grace to Abraham by promise.

5 (19-22): The governmental end of the law.

5. [x]Wherefore then the law? It was [y]added for the sake of transgressions, [z]until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; being [a]ordained through angels in the hand of a [b]mediator. Now a mediator is not of [c]one; but [d]God is one. Is the law then [e]against the

m Rom.3.5. Rom. 6. 19.
n cf.ch.2.21.
o cf.Rev.22. 18. cf. Rom. 3. 21, 28.
p Gen.13.15. cf. Mi.7.20.
q cf.Gen.25. 5, 6. cf.Rom.9.7.
r Gen.22.18. cf. Gen. 3. 15.
s cf. Rom.4. 9, 10, 13, 14.
t Ex. 12. 40, 41. cf. Gen. 15. 13.
u cf.Rom.4. 14. ctr. Heb.7. 18, 19.
v cf. Rom. 11. 5. cf. Rom. 4. 13.
w Gen. 22. 16, 17.

*Omitted by the earliest MSS extant, but inserted by some quite early, and in the Syriac versions as "in Christ."

cf. Heb. 6. 13, 14; cf. Ps. 105. 9-12. x ver. 21; cf. Matt. 5. 17, 18. y Rom. 3. 20; Rom. 5. 20. z cf. ch. 4. 4; cf. Heb. 10. 8, 9. a Acts 7. 53. Heb. 2. 2; cf. Ps. 68. 17. b cf. Ex. 20. 19-22; cf. Ex. 32. 30. c cf. Ex. 19. 3-8; cf. Ex. 34. 27. d cf. Eph. 1. 4-6; cf. Rom. 3. 30; cf. Matt. 11. 25, 26. e cf. Rom. 3. 31; cf. Rom. 7. 7, etc.

removed out of the way of man by Jesus Christ, and thus alone could we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

4. The apostle returns now back to Abraham and the promise to him, in order to show the impotence of the law to annul it. He appeals here to the moral sense of man. If he were only a man, and had made a covenant unconditionally, pledging himself to this or that, and especially, he adds, "If this covenant were confirmed, no one could disannul it" and no one could add a condition to it. Now God had made it, as is clear, in these promises to Abraham, and confirmed them, as he tells us directly, to Christ. The covenant was of promise and it was both made and confirmed. It was an absolute promise, not a conditional one. No condition, therefore, could be added without destroying its very nature. When God said "in thy Seed," it was of Christ plainly that He was speaking. As we look back at the history, we see that it was after Isaac had been delivered, as Scripture says, in a figure, from that sacrificial death from which Christ was not delivered, that God gave this. It was Christ that was in His mind. Here was the Lamb whom God would provide for the burnt-offering. Here was the ram who in the truth of it saved Isaac, as we may say,—the ram caught by its horns in the thicket: Christ thus, caught, as it were, by the very power that He had to save and bless, which His love, would not allow Him, therefore, not to put in exercise. Christ was the Seed to whom God confirmed the covenant of promise, and the law came 430 years too late to set it aside at all; but it is manifest if it were added to it, it would disannul it. The apostle dismisses both thoughts, the disannulling and the adding, the adding being, in fact, the same as disannulling. Law added would be the introduction of a contradictory principle; for if the inheritance were of the law, it would be no more of promise, whereas God gave it to Abraham by promise.

5. Naturally enough the question comes here, Why then the law? "It was added," answers the apostle, "*for the sake of* transgressions." Such is the expression; which means, not to keep transgressions in check, as the common thought seems to be, for Scripture itself has already told us that "where there is no law, there is *no* transgression." Thus it could not keep transgression in check; on the contrary, it could only produce it; that is, as we have already

promises of God? Far be the thought. For if there had been a law given [f]able to give life, [g]righteousness would indeed have been of law. But the scripture hath [h]shut up all things under sin, that the [i]promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

6 (23-25): Its limit reached, faith having come.

6. But [j]before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, [k]shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed. So that the law hath been our [l]tutor unto Christ, that we might be [m]justified by faith; but now that faith is come, we are [n]no longer under a tutor.

7 (26-29): And in Christ Jew and Gentile perfected alike.

7. For ye are [o]all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were [p]baptized unto Christ have put on Christ. There is [q]no Jew nor

f *cf.* Rom. 8. 3.
g *cf.* Deut. 6. 25.
h ver. 23. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 23.
i *cf.* Rom. 4. 16.
j ch. 4. 1, etc.
k ver. 22. *cf.* Heb. 2. 15.
l ch. 4. 2. *cf.* Heb. 10. 1.
m *cf.* Rom. 10. 4. *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39.
n *cf.* Rom. 6. 14. *cf.* Jno. 3. 28

-30. *o* Rom. 3. 29, 30; Rom. 4. 16. *p* Rom. 6. 3; *cf.* Acts 19. 3-5. *q cf.* Col. 3. 11; *cf.* Rom. 10. 12.

said, it could make sin take that form. It was added, then, for that purpose; and it was added for a certain season; not being that which could confer the blessing upon man, it must be taken out of the way, in order that the blessing might come. It was added, therefore, temporarily for a certain reason; added "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." There was another thing. "It was ordained by angels," but it had nothing of the glory of the new covenant as made good by Christ. The glory at Sinai, as the psalmist says, was angelic glory (Ps. lxviii. 17). God Himself was unrevealed; He was behind, in the thick darkness. Or if Moses saw Him, it was but the back parts: His face could not be seen. And the very reflection of glory thus in the face of Moses made men unable to behold; it, therefore, put man only in the distance, did not bring him nigh, and thus there had to be a mediator, manifestly Moses himself; but a mediator implies two parties. "A mediator is not a mediator of one," but God was the only One who spoke in the promise to Abraham. God is One: there was no other party. All depended, therefore, in the promise, upon God Himself.

But this seems to set the law against the promise of God, men might urge. Nay, he says, in the nature of the case, a law would have had to be given which could have given life, in order that righteousness might be worked out under it. Life was what man needed. The law was the ministration of death and not of life. Righteousness, therefore, could not be by the law; and the law was not against the promise of God, but, on the contrary, shut men up to that promise for all their blessing. The Scripture which speaks of it, "hath shut up all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

6. This shows us, therefore, clearly the limit of the law. "Before faith came," that is, before it was God's open and acknowledged principle of blessing, "we were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed." That faith was made necessary by the fact of the ruin in which the law proved us to be. God must bring in blessing through Another: faith in Another must be His principle. The law thus was our schoolmaster until Christ. It had a needed lesson to teach for a time. No schooling is for all time. The schoolmaster's work is to make us independent of himself, and the law's work was to bring us into a place where it would no more be needful. Its very service was to shut us up to justification by faith alone, no other mode being possible. But if, then, this is to be so, "after that faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster." Faith being openly proclaimed God's principle, the law's work is done.

7. And this is shown by the fact of the new place into which God has put His people now, "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" the school of law is not the proper place for us. That does not mean that we are not to profit by

Greek; there is no [r] bond- nor freeman; there is no [s] male nor female; for ye are all [t] one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye [u] Abraham's seed, and [v] heirs according to promise.

r *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 20-24. *cf.* Philem. 16.
s *cf.* Acts 1. 14. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 11. 3-16.
t *cf.* Eph. 2. 15, 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
u *cf.* Rom. 4. 11.
v ch. 4. 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 15.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv.–v. 6.)

The meaning of the Spirit of Adoption having come.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iv. 1–20.)

The Grace given.

1 (1-3): Nonage.

1. NOW I say that so long as the heir is a [w] child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though lord of all; but he is under [x] guardians and stewards until the term appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were kept in bondage under the [y] elements of the world.

w *cf.* Heb. 6. 1.
x ch. 3. 24.
y *cf.* Col. 2. 8, 20. ver. 9.

the lessons which the law taught, of course. We may profit by the lessons which we learn in school without being under the schoolmaster; but under the schoolmaster, no one says "Father." The place of sons as such is manifestly somewhere else than at school. This, then, has come for us, for "as many of us as have been baptized to Christ have put on Christ." Christ is, according to the truth announced in baptism itself, the One in whom we are, therefore, before God. It is His perfection, His beauty that is seen upon us. Nothing else is seen, no earthly condition, no place of privilege beside. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Manifestly, if each one of us is in Christ, Christ must be the same for each and all of us. There can be no distinction here. For distinction, we must look away from Christ; but if then we "are Christ's," then "are we Abraham's seed," in the fullest way identified with the very One in whom the blessing was to be, identified with the very Heir of blessing, and therefore heirs according to the promise, "in thy Seed:" that is Christ, in whom we are.

DIV. 3. SUBD. 1.

1. The apostle, therefore, now naturally returns to what he has already spoken of as the manifest peculiar blessing of Christianity itself, the coming of the Spirit. "We are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" but then there were children of God before Christianity. The children of God were not gathered together as such; the true children were not acknowledged as such; but they were there. Christ died, not for the nation of Israel only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. There were, then, children, even while they were scattered. There were children of God under the law, but as long as they were there, they differed nothing from servants. There was no cry of "Abba, Father." There was no Father openly acknowledging them. The children were just as much children. They were, in that sense, "lords of all." Nevertheless, they differed nothing from servants as to their practical condition. They were "under tutors and governors," for their own good, "until the time appointed of the Father." Now this tutelage, as the apostle tells us, was yet a real bondage. The law was the elements of the world. It is, in fact, what enters into every system of natural religion that was ever in man's mind. It is the principle upon which the whole world goes on, which is necessary to it, and man can conceive no other; but, by that very fact, it was bondage to the child of God. He was under that which denied him the nearness which was truly his own and prevented his serving in the liberty of the child's place.

2 (4, 5): The Son subjected to law for our redemption from it.

3 (6, 7): The Spirit in the heart manifests the sons.

4 (8 20): The lapse of the Galatians.

2. But when the [z]fulness of the time was come, God [a]sent forth his Son, come of a [b]woman, come [c]under law, that he might [d]redeem those under law, that we might [e]receive the adoption of sons.
3. And, [f]because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the [g]Spirit of his Son into your* hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an [h]heir through God.†
4. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye were in [i]bondage to those that by nature are no gods; but

z *cf.* Gen. 18. 10. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.
a *cf.* Jno. 16. 28.
b *cf.* Gen. 3. 15. *cf.* Is. 7. 14.
c *cf.* Lk. 2. 22-39. *cf.* Ex. 21. 2-6.
d ch. 3. 13.
e ch. 3. 26. *cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13.
f ver. 7. *cf.* Eph. 2. 19.
g Rom. 8. 15

* The weight of MS. authority is for "our"; although the Syriac versions support "your." The sense seems decisive.

† "An heir through God" is given by most editors; though MS. authority is nearly equal for "heir of God through Christ."

-17. *h cf.* Eph. 1. 14; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 4. *i cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9; *cf.* 2 Chron. 13. 9; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 2.

2. But the "fulness of time" came. God had steadfastly in view the Object which was before Him and He could not delay longer than necessity demanded. "When the fulness of the time" then "was come, God sent forth His Son," the One in whom there was necessarily, by what He was, the greatest possible nearness to Himself, yet now apparently at a distance, "come of a woman" and actually Man, but "come under the law" also, under that which to every other was bondage, which for Himself could be none. With Him there was no impossibility of working out the righteousness of the law. It could only testify to the perfection that was in Him, and thus, after His thirty years of probation, the Spirit of God comes openly upon Him, marking Him out as the Object of God's fullest delight. *He* was sealed, as we are not, because of His own perfection; but He entered, in that very act, upon a course of ministry to others in which redemption would be accomplished for those under the law, that now "we might receive the adoption of sons"; that is, the full *place* of children, as well as the reality of being such.

3. For this is what sonship means, in contrast with children, as the terms are used here. The child (τέκνον) is the one by nature that. He is born to it, and if born he can never cease to be the child of the one of whom he is born; but he may not have the place of child, and that is what in Scripture, "sonship" implies. The son (υἱός) is the *acknowledged* child, the child in the child's place; and that is what is proper to Christianity. Children there were before it, but now they are "sons"; and we have received, in that way, the adoption. The consequence is: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Notice that the place as given of God must be ours first, then comes the qualification for the place, the Spirit of His Son. How wonderfully does that speak! It is not the spirit of a son simply, but the Spirit of His Son. In fact, it is the perfection of Christ which has rendered possible this reception by us of the Spirit of Christ, and which, therefore, brings us into the sweetness of the assurance of what Christ Himself is to God, in the value of which we abide. How then, asks the apostle as it were, is it possible, in such a place, to be a servant any longer, that is, a slave? It is the bondage of slavery of which he is speaking. Servants, of course, we are in a true sense, by the very fact that we are sons. We serve as such. God has title to service, surely, from all His sons, but there is no bondage in this. If sons, we are gloriously free, and if sons, we are heirs of God through Christ. This, then, is the characteristic of Christianity.

4. The apostle turns now, therefore, to the Galatians, to appeal to them as to their lapse from such conscious blessedness. The going into Judaism is for him much the same thing as going back to the heathenism out of which, in fact, they had been brought. They had not known God, and then were doing service to those who by nature were no gods. Now they had known Him, or rather

now, when ye [j]know God, or rather, are [k]known of God, how turn ye again to the [l]weak and [m]beggarly elements, whereunto ye [n]desire over again to be in bondage? Ye [o]observe days and months and times and years: I am [p]afraid of you, lest by any means I have labored as to you in [q]vain. I [r]beseech you, brethren, be as I am; for I am [s]as ye [were]: ye have in [t]nothing injured me. But ye know that in* [u]weakness of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first; and that which was your† temptation in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but as an [v]angel of God ye received me—as Christ Jesus. What [w]blessedness then was yours!‡ for I bear you witness that, if possible, ye would have [x]plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. So then, am I become your [y]enemy because I tell you the truth? They are [z]zealous after you in no right way; on the contrary they desire to [a]shut you out [from us], that ye may be zealous after them. But it is right to be zealously affected [b]always in what is right, and not only when I am present with you. My [c]children, of whom again I [d]travail in birth until Christ be formed in you, yea, I could wish to be [e]present with you now, and to [f]change my voice; for I stand in [g]doubt of you.

* διὰ with the accusative may have this sense.
† Some good authorities have "my"; others nothing.
‡ Or "where is the blessedness?"

cf. Matt. 10. 40. *w cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8. *x cf.* Acts 20. 37, 38; *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 5; *cf.* Matt. 13. 20, 21. *y cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 15; *cf.* Prov. 27. 6. *z cf.* Matt. 23. 15. *a cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 15. *b cf.* Phil. 2. 12. *c cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 15; *cf.* Phile. 10; *cf.* Phil. 4. 1; *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 7. *d cf.* Col. 2. 1; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 4. *e cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 3. *f cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 21; *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2. *g* ver. 11; *cf.* ch. 1. 6.

j cf. Jno. 17. 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 2, 3.
k 1 Cor. 8. 3. *cf.* Nah. 1. 7.
l cf. Rom. 8. 3. *cf.* Heb. 7. 18, 19.
m cf. Acts 3. 2.
n cf. ch. 3. 1-3.
o cf. Col. 2. 16. *cf.* Num. 28. 11.
p vers. 19, 20. *cf.* Col. 2. 1.
q ch. 5. 2, 4. *cf.* Phil. 2. 16. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 5.
r cf. 2 Cor. 6. 11-13. *cf.* Acts 26. 29. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 1.
s cf. 1 Thess. 2. 8. *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 29.
t cf. 2 Cor. 2. 5.
u cf. 1 Cor. 2. 3. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 7.
v cf. 2 Cor. 5. 20.

He had known them. Known and recognized, how could they turn to "the weak and beggarly elements of the world" whereunto they desired again to be in bondage? It was heathenism in which, in fact, they had been. These "elements of the world" for them had been in heathenism, and yet he says "How turn ye *again?*" It was all the same thing, in fact; if Christ were given up, what did it matter? They were observing days and months and times and years. Nothing very dreadful, people would say, in that; but he immediately comments upon it: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Then he beseeches them that they should be still as he himself continued to be; their lapse could not injure him in one sense. They knew how, in spite of infirmity of the flesh, he had preached the gospel to them at the first. They had not taken offence at the weakness, the physical weakness that they saw in him; they had not rejected him on account of that, which, in fact, was only designed to make the power of the Spirit in him more apparent. They had received him as an angel of God, even as the Christ he represented. Had they then, in fact, known that blessedness of which they had certainly spoken? They would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him. How was it now? Did telling them the truth make him their enemy? But there were others who were manifesting great zeal in their behalf, not in a right way. They were acting, as he puts it, for a purpose,—would exclude the apostle, that they might have themselves that place in their affections which they had robbed him of; but if they had really found the blessing which they declared, would it not be good for them to abide in that, to show their zeal after that manner? In fact, he was full of longing after them. He had been the one

SUBDIVISION 2 (Chaps. iv. 21–v. 6.)

The testimony of the law itself.

1 (iv. 21-31): As the mother, so the birth.

1. TELL me, ye that desire to be under law, do ye not [h] hear the law? For it is [i] written that Abraham had two sons: one by the handmaid and one by the freewoman. But he that was of the handmaid was born after the [j] flesh; and he that was of the freewoman through the [k] promise. Which things are to be [l] allegorized; for these are two [m] covenants; the one from mount [n] Sina, bringing forth to [o] bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sina in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem that now is, for [p] she is in bondage with her children; but Jerusalem which is [q] above is free, which is our [r] mother.* For it is [s] written, Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break out and cry, thou that travailest not; for [t] more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband. For [u] we,† brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

* Some MSS. have, "mother of us all." † Others read, "ye."

cf. Heb. 12. 22; *cf.* Rev 21. 2. *r cf.* Ps. 87. 5; *cf.* Phil. 3. 20. *s* Is. 54. 1. *t cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 5; *cf.* Ps. 113. 9; *cf.* Rom. 11. 25. *u* ch. 3. 29; *cf.* Rom. 9. 8.

h cf. Rom. 3. 19, 20.
i Gen. 16. 15. Gen. 21. 2.
j cf. Gen. 16. 2. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 13.
k cf. Gen. 17. 15-17. ver. 28. *cf.* Jas. 1. 18.
l cf. Heb. 7. 1, etc. *cf.* Mk. 4. 13.
m cf. Heb. 8. 6, 7. *cf.* Heb. 9. 15.
n cf. Ex. 24. 6-8.
o ch. 5. 1. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 15. *cf.* Heb. 2. 15. *cf.* Col. 2. 20-23.
p cf. Jno. 8. 32-36.
q cf. Heb. 11. 10.

who had brought them into this blessing in Christ. Now he was travailing in birth again, as it were, (had all the sorrow and pain of that), until Christ should be formed in them. He desired to be present with them, yet with a changed voice. He had had to change it, for he stood in doubt of them.

SUBD. 2.

1. If they would not listen any more to the gospel or to the one who had spoken to them for Christ, the apostle would appeal now to the very law itself, which undoubtedly they must hear. Zealous law-keepers must hear the law. Here he goes back to Abraham again, and in a manner which, to some who scarcely fully accept the typical character of Old Testament history, would appear strange. Yet to "foolish Galatians" he can use this without questioning their ability to realize, not only the likeness to truth, but the truth itself that is in it. In fact, these typical pictures speak for themselves and are designed to speak. When once we have the key to them, their perfect agreement with the truth can be nothing else than that designed of God to set it forth. Abraham's two sons thus naturally speak of those two classes of his offspring of which the apostle has been speaking. There is the seed after the flesh; there is the seed after the Spirit, the natural child "and the spiritual child," the child "of faith." It is not hard, therefore, to understand the similitude when he emphasizes the one seed as that by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. Bondage and freedom have been his theme already. How fully plain does it become when he tells us that he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, in the ordinary course of nature, with nothing necessarily of God in it, and on the other hand he of the free woman was by promise. He has already spoken of this promise, has already connected its "in thee," said of him whose faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, with the faith of those who are the children of promise. These things, he says, not, "are an allegory," exactly, but "are allegorized" They were true things, things which had actually taken place, no question, but which nevertheless had "happened to them," as the apostle says of other things in their history, "for types." They had a divinely intended meaning in them and not merely could be used to show forth such things. These two, then, are the two covenants, the one from the Mount Sinai,

But as then he that was born after the flesh [v]persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also is it now. But what saith the scripture? [w]Cast out the handmaid and her son; for the son of the handmaid shall not [x]inherit with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are [y]not children of the handmaid, but of the freewoman.

2 (v. 1-6): Circumcision binds to law, and antagonizes Christ and faith.

2. With freedom hath Christ [z]set us free: [a]stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a [b]yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that [c]if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every

v Gen. 21. 9. *cf.* ch. 5. 17.
w Gen. 21. 10. *cf.* ch. 5. 24.
x cf. ch. 5. 21. *cf.* Rom. 8. 12, 13.
y cf. Rom. 6. 14. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 6.
z ver. 13. *cf.* Jno. 8. 36. *cf.* Rom. 8. 2.
a Phil. 4. 1.

cf. ch. 2. 5. *b cf.* Acts 15. 10; *cf.* Col. 2. 8. *c cf.* Acts 15. 1; *ctr.* Acts 16. 3; *cf.* ch. 2. 3.

the law bringing forth to bondage, which is Hagar; the other, that of promise "Jerusalem which is above," "which is the mother of us all," or "which is our mother." "Jerusalem which is above" naturally carries our thoughts on to that of which John gives us in his Revelation by and by a fuller view. It was the home city, the city of which all the people of God now are children. The apostle speaks of it as having a present reality and a place which faith indeed alone can recognize, but which is none the less real. Paul turns to the prophet here, in order to show us that while, in fact, the barren was not bearing (before the time of Israel's real travailing and birth, as in a day to come,) there would be, nevertheless, the strange paradox of many more children to her than when she had an husband. This is language which the apostle's word about the olive-tree in the epistle to the Romans should enable us clearly to understand. The branches are broken off, but yet there are branches in their place which are counted as part of the olive-tree itself. They are, in fact, in a true sense, the fruit of Israel, although Israel has in the meantime lost that fruitful condition, and here we find the children which, in fact, should more rejoice her heart, when looking at things from the divine point of view, than all the generations of the nation in the flesh merely. Here, of course, are the children of promise. Here is the true Isaac, but the opposition between the one born after the flesh and this new spiritual birth is manifest. This very apostle is proof of it even now, but the known opposition everywhere manifest on the part of Israel to Christ and to His people was, of course, the greatest proof. Israel after the flesh was persecuting the children of promise, but what would be the result? The casting out of the bondwoman and her son. God had, in fact, disclaimed the principle of the law, which was the principle of bondage, and if He had now sons that were really of the free woman, children of promise, children that divine grace had made such, there could not be a common recognition of these and of those so totally opposite. "We then," he says, "brethren, are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." The law could easily, as it were, and naturally, bring forth children to God. How natural it is for men to accept a system of this sort and to be put upon such terms with God. The whole nation of Israel at once and decisively took this ground without a question. On the other hand, the true seed desired of God must be all born by divine power; born slowly, as one may think, long years passing while they seem to be only scanty in number and slow enough to mature, yet, after all, God will have His own. Scorn as Israel might those who now were being by the Spirit of God led to Christ and Christianity, Israel's casting out was already manifestly at hand, when the very place of their holy house would be dug up by the Roman people and the worship ordained of God for the people in the flesh would no longer be possible to them. Their house was left to them desolate. It was their house, not God's, but that was the sentence upon it. It would soon be not even their house any longer.

2. The apostle closes with the exhortation to "stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free" and not to be "entangled again

man that is circumcised, that he is a [d]debtor to do the whole law. Ye are [e]deprived of profit from Christ, ye who are justified by law: ye are [f]fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit [g]await by faith the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus [h]neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but [i]faith that [j]worketh by love.

d Rom. 2. 25. *cf.* Gen. 17. 10, etc. with Rom. 4. 11, 12.
e *cf.* ch. 2. 21. *cf.* Col. 1. 23.
f *ctr.* Heb. 6. 6. *ctr.* 2 Pet. 3. 17. *cf.* ch. 4. 9.
g *cf.* Rom. 5. 2, 5. *cf.* Rom. 8. 23–25.
h ch. 6. 15. *cf.* ch. 3. 28. *cf.* Rom. 10. 12.
i *cf.* Rom. 3. 22. *cf.* Rom. 5. 1.
j *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 3. *cf.* Jas. 2. 20–26.

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. v. 7–vi. 18.)

The Practical Test of the Two Principles.

1 (7–15): The one command of law.

1. YE [k]were running well; who hath [l]hindered you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion is [m]not of him who calleth you. A [n]little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have [o]confidence as to you in the Lord, that ye will be no otherwise minded; and he that troubleth you shall [p]bear his judgment, whosoever he may be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach

cf. Col. 1. 4, 6. k ch. 3. 3; ch. 4. 15; *cf.* 1 Cor. 9. 24. l ch. 1. 7; vers. 10, 12. m *ctr.* 1 Cor. 1. 9; *ctr.* 1 Thes. 5. 24; *cf.* ch. 1. 6. n 1 Cor. 5. 6; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 33; *cf.* Gen. 19. 20; *cf.* Ex. 12. 15. o *cf.* ch. 4. 20; *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 3; *cf.* Phile. 21. p *cf.* ch. 1. 8, 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13, 20.

with the yoke of bondage." He is very strong that there could be no profit of Christ to those who put themselves under the law. If they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. A circumcised man was a debtor to do the whole law. This may seem strange from one who, as we know, before this time had himself circumcised Timothy, but the circumstances were entirely different. Timothy was a Jew by his mother's side, and it was, in that case, such a concession on the part of one not under the law putting himself under it in the very liberty that he had to gain others, as made it a sign, therefore, of liberty instead of bondage. With the Galatians it would be entirely different. They, as Gentiles, were not debtors to the law in any way, and if they put themselves under it, it was to gain from it a spiritual blessing; it was a real addition, therefore, to Christ that they were making, but by this, as we have already seen, they would be "fallen from grace," for grace cannot admit the conditional principle of law without losing all its character. Again, we see also that he has no thought of any one taking up the law as a rule of life simply; it is of justification by it that he speaks, and this was in fact the only question that the law raised; but as Christians in possession of the Spirit, which we have seen to be the sign of their Christianity, they were outside the law, and necessarily in possession of a righteousness which the Spirit of God could seal, a righteousness perfect before God. They only waited in faith for the hope which was connected with this; not for righteousness as a hope, but for the hope of glory attaching to it. Thus, they were beyond any possible need of law; and "in Christ," as he declares, "neither circumcision" availed "anything, nor uncircumcision." A man was quite outside both the Jewish and the Gentile acceptance. God accepted nothing, except as faith, which, as the sign of dependence, drew blessing from Him; and which, in its nature, worked not by the principle of fear, which was that of law, but by love.

DIV. 4.

1. The blessing could not be more complete, and they had experienced the joy and power of it. This causes him again to express his astonishment at their now refusing obedience to the truth. They had been running well. Who now was hindering them? It certainly did not come from God, this new persuasion. On the other hand, the power of evil was such that a little leaven would soon leaven the whole lump. Evil, in fact, makes continual demands. One departure from truth will necessitate many, in order that there may be perfect consist-

circumcision, [q]why am I still being persecuted? Then hath the [r]stumbling-block of the cross been done away. I would they would even [s]cut themselves off who are unsettling you. For ye, brethren, have been [t]called to liberty; only [use] not that liberty as an [u]occasion for the flesh, but by [v]love serve one another. For all the law is [w]fulfilled in one word, [even] in this, [x]Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; but if ye [y]bite and devour one another, see that ye be not [z]consumed of one another.

2 (16-21): The antagonism of flesh and spirit.

2. Now I say, [a]Walk in* the Spirit, and ye shall in no wise fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the [b]flesh lusteth

* Or, "by."

q *cf.* ch. 6. 12. *cf.* Jas. 4. 4.
r *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 11, 12. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 23. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 8.
s *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 2. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 19.
t ver. 1. Rom. 8. 12.
u 1 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* Rom. 6. 1, 15-22.
v 1 Pet. 2. 16. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3 16-18.
w Rom. 13. 8 10.

Matt. 22. 39, 40. x Lev. 19. 18. y *cf.* Jas. 3. 13-16; *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 3-5. z *cf.* Tit. 1. 10, 11; *cf.* Is. 9. 18-21. a ver. 25; *cf.* Rom. 18. 12, 13. b *cf.* Rom. 7. 22, 23; *cf.* Gen. 25. 22, 23 with Jno. 3. 6.

ency. There can be no possible compromise in a path like this, but how great the folly of those who, having experienced the joy and power of divine grace, could now take up with that which was in its nature absolutely contrary! If he looks at them, he may well be disheartened; but in grace itself he had found his refuge. In the Lord he could have confidence that they would be none otherwise minded, and the troubler, whoever it might be, should bear his judgment. He sees easily that there was temptation enough indeed, in a certain sense, to adopt such a thing as circumcision, which would remove, as between Jews and Christians, the whole offence of the cross. The apostle puts it as a thing impossible rightly to cease, and we see the persecution of which he is thinking is on the part of the Jew; and we have seen, it was so distinctly in the history which the Acts has given us. It was to the Jew that the cross was a scandal—the sign, as he has already told us, of One upon whom the law put its curse, of a curse needed to be taken because of the condition of those under law. How impossible for the Jew to allow that the law had nothing but a curse for man, and that the very Saviour of men, to be that, must bear the curse! The cross was the complete condemnation of man before God. It was also complete deliverance for those who accepted the condemnation, but this was the destruction necessarily of all legal righteousness. "I would," he says, "they would even cut themselves off which trouble you." He has no possible tolerance for that which was the destruction of Christian truth and principle; his love to the souls of men made him what people would call intolerant. But, in fact, while these men would uphold the law, the very thing that the law required from man was in practice set aside. The Galatians were finding it so. They had given up their true Christian liberty, and yet, after all, were not keeping the law, for all the law was fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." They had surely realized the power of divine grace in this way, but now the effect of their legal addition to the gospel was a total change in their own spirit. They were, as he intimates, "biting and devouring one another." What use to talk about the law in such a state as that? They might well be afraid lest they should "be consumed one of another;" but this is the necessary effect of law ever. The law is claim, demand, and expects, therefore, a full ability on man's part to meet the demand. The spirit of self-righteousness, which alone could take comfort in it on such a principle, has necessarily in it no tenderness, no recognition of one's own infirmity and no compassion for the infirmity of others. The law itself had none and could have none. It was its business to condemn, and it did it well. If a man continued not "in all things written in the book of the law to do them," he was under the curse. How simple, that to accept the law, then, as that under which one was, would be the destruction of all tenderness, of the very spirit which the law really required.

2. There is indeed in man everywhere the flesh and the lust of the flesh,

against the Spirit, and the [c]Spirit against the flesh; and these are opposed one to the other, so that ye [d]should not practise the things that ye would. But if ye are [e]led of the Spirit, ye are [f]not under law. Now the [g]works of the flesh are manifest, which are [h]fornication, [i]uncleanness, [j]lasciviousness, [k]idolatry, [l]sorcery, [m]enmities, [n]strife, [o]jealousies, [p]anger, [q]contentions, [r]disputes, [s]factions, [t]envyings, [u]murders, [v]drunkenness, [w]revels, and such like; as to which I tell you beforehand, even as I said before, that they who [x]do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

c *cf.* Ex. 17. 16. *cf.* Jas. 4. 5 with 2 Cor. 11. 2.
d *cf.* Rom. 7. 15 25 with Rom. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 17.
e Rom. 8. 14.
f Rom. 6. 14. *cf.* Rom. 7. 4. ver. 23.
g *cf.* Rom. 1. 26–31.

cf. Eph. 5. 11, 12; *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 1-4; *cf.* Gen. 6. 5. *h cf.* Gen. 19. 32. *i cf.* Eph. 5. 3, 4. *j cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 10. *k cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 21. *l cf.* Acts 13. 6. *m cf.* Tit. 3. 3. *n cf.* Prov. 17. 19. *o cf.* Acts 13. 45. *p cf.* Gen. 27. 41. *q cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 3. *r cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5. *s cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. *t cf.* Mk. 15. 10. *u cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 12. *v cf.* Gen. 9. 20, 21. *w cf.* Lk. 15. 13. *x cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; *cf.* Rev. 21. 8.

and for a soul that does not yet realize the true deliverance that God has for us, the perfectly natural remedy is to take up with the law. It is, in fact, no remedy, but the reverse. The remedy is to "walk in the Spirit," as he urges upon them here. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,"—not as some would read it now, ye shall *have* no flesh, nor even, ye shall have no lust of it. Lust is that which gives the flesh its character; that is to say, the craving of an unsatisfied heart away from God, and this, too, remains in the Christian, as is plain from what he urges here. "For the flesh," he says, "lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." He does not say, as the common version puts it: "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would," but "So that ye should not." He will not think of an impossibility on the part of one who walks in the Spirit. To the Spirit, clearly, nothing can be impossibility. Still, the two remain here, as we have seen already in Romans, even in the delivered Christian; and just as in Romans, it is against the Spirit that the flesh lusts. He does not give us here the striving of self against self which was that of the man in the seventh chapter, as yet not delivered. He is not, therefore, as some imagine, speaking simply of what was a low state on the part of the Galatians. Granted that they were in a low state, but he puts it here as a general truth, and in language, as already said, which would apply to a man in the Spirit, a delivered man. Even so, flesh and Spirit are there with all their absolute opposition to one another, and the tendency is necessarily to hinder one doing the things he would. Some have put it as if it was the will of the flesh that the Spirit here hinders, but even in the conflict of the seventh of Romans, or rather, in the state of bondage which we find there, the captive, after all, assures himself that the things that he *would* are the things according to God. The apostle would not allow that the will away from God is a Christian state at all; but the flesh, nevertheless, will seek to assert itself, and the only remedy for the soul is the way of the Spirit; that is, as we have seen, in occupation with Christ. With Him before our eyes, there is nothing for the lust of the flesh whatever, and moreover the heart that truly knows Him finds in Him a satisfaction and rest which delivers from the corruption that is in the world through lust; but then, "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." The two things are in absolute and perfect contradiction one to another.

The works of the flesh are now enumerated, and we must remember that if the flesh be in the Christian, he can never promise himself that they will not be found in their full dreadful character, if once there be license given to it. The apostle has no idea of a modified flesh in a Christian. There are doubtless very different characters of it, but a close brotherhood in the family of sin. The apostle puts them together in that way,—"Murder, drunkenness, revellings and such like," very different in the extent of the evil, but if the soul's anchorage be lost there is no possibility of telling how far it will

3 (22-26): The fruit of the Spirit.

3. But the [v]fruit of the Spirit is [z]love, [a]joy, [b]peace, [c]long-suffering, [d]kindness, [e]goodness, [f]fidelity, [g]meekness, [h]self-control: [i]against such things there is no law. And they that are Christ's * have [j]crucified the flesh, with its [k]passions and lusts. If we [l]live in the Spirit, let us [m]walk also in the Spirit. Let us not become [n]vainglorious, [o]provoking one another, [p]envying one another.

4 (vi. 1-5): Mercy to the falling, as experiencing one's own weakness.

4. Brethren, if even a man be [q]overtaken in any tres-

* Many read, "of Christ Jesus."

12. *g cf.* Phil. 2. 3. *h cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 6. *i cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 9. *j cf.* Rom. 8. 3 with Rom. 6. 2. *k cf.* Col. 3. 5 9; *cf.* Eph. 4. 22. *l cf.* Jno. 3. 3 with Rom. 8. 6. *m* ver. 16; *cf.* Eph. 5. 8. *n* Phil. 2. 3. *o ctr.* Heb. 10. 24; *cf.* Prov. 15. 1. *p* Ps. 37. 1; Prov. 24. 1. *q ctr.* 1 Cor. 5. 1, etc; *ctr.* ch. 5. 19-21; *cf.* Acts 23. 3-5; *cf.* Num. 6. 9.

y cf. Phil. 1. 11.
z cf. 1 Jno. 4. 7.
a cf. Rom. 14. 17.
b cf. Rom. 14. 19.
c cf. Eph. 4. 2.
d cf. Eph. 4. 32.
e cf. Eph. 5. 9.
f cf. 1 Pet. 5.

drift. It is only the power of the Spirit that can control the flesh; and He controls it by leading us, as we have seen, in another way; but the Spirit, while the full expression of divine grace towards us, nevertheless requires the most complete subjection to Himself. God must be God. It is no grace that will tolerate any forgetfulness of this. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Grace is not toleration in any wise, and the Spirit of God can only lead those who are in full subjection in desire, at least, to Him. It is here that we need to be able so fully to say: "Search me, O God, and try me," to have our feet in the blessed hands of One who cleanses after His own mind as to cleansing. Of the whole category of sin here, it is said, "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is the road to death from which the Spirit of God takes a man, not leaves him upon it.

3. The fruit of the Spirit is now brought before us. Here, too, is a brotherhood of graces. "Fruit" the apostle calls it. The flesh has its works. He will not give that the name of "fruit," and here it is not, in fact, of work that he is speaking, but of an inward temper, the development of the divine nature, which, therefore, is in unity and peace all through. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-government, against such there is no law." Thus, that which the law could give no power to fulfil, is found by thus walking in the Spirit, and "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:" that is to say, they have accepted the cross of Christ as that which is for them the judgment of it all and their separation from it. How perfect, in fact, is the judgment of self which the cross truly apprehended gives. It is not merely the judgment of this or that about us, but the complete removal of the man in the flesh, in order that Christ may fill all the scene for us. The knowledge of the new man is that "Christ is all and in all." Thus, it is not a process, as he puts it here, this crucifixion: it is a thing accomplished. We may have to learn by degrees what it means. The light grows brighter upon the path as we walk in it, and we discern more clearly, no doubt, that which suits God. Thus, there is growth in apprehension as to detail, but as to principle, the thing is done at the start. It is Christ, not self that we have put on, and it is that which suits Him that we follow. As it is put in Colossians, we are to "do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus," that is to say, as representing Him upon earth; and that means, assuredly, that from the start the flesh is crucified for us. The cross stands at the beginning of the Christian path, and the Galatians here had the Spirit. He does not question it. They were alive in the Spirit. If so, he says, let the walk be in the Spirit also, "let us not be desirous of vain glory" which the law, if man could keep it, could not but promote, the effect necessarily following; but as to others there would be a spirit of intolerance and not of love; "provoking one another," he says here, "envying one another."

4. We see that he is occupied throughout here, with the practical test; a

pass, ye that are [r]spiritual [s]restore such an one in the spirit of [t]meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. [u]Bear ye one another's burdens, and so [v]fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man [w]esteemeth himself to be something when he is nothing, he [z]deceiveth himself. But let each [y]prove his own work, and then he will have his glorying in regard to [z]himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one shall bear his [a]own burden.

r *cf.* ch. 5. 25. *cf.* Rom. 15. 1.
s *cf.* Gen. 14. 16. *cf.* Jno. 13. 12-15.
t *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *ctr.* Lk. 18. 11.
u *cf.* Acts 20. 35. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 14. *v ctr.* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* Heb. 4. 15. *w cf.* Rom. 12. 3; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 12. *x cf.* Jas. 1. 22. *y cf.* Rom. 12. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 28. *z cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 12-18. *a cf.* Rom. 14. 12.

powerful method of appeal, surely, to those who had, in fact, known the blessedness which the gospel could give; far as they might now be departing from it. The law might require love indeed and did; but it could not produce it, could not even encourage such a spirit in those that followed it. You will never find the legal mind tender really of others. The apostle, therefore, presses it upon them here, that if they were, in fact, spiritual, that would be seen in their behaviour. If one were overtaken in a fault, they would restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, the very opposite of the spirit engendered by the principle which they had taken up. They would consider themselves lest they also should be tempted; but for a man under law, it does not do to consider himself after that fashion; it would work discouragement and despair. On the other hand, he must assure himself under law of his competence to fulfil the commandment, and therefore he must exact from others the fulfilment; assured of their competence no less than his. Spirituality, in fact, may be claimed by those who act in a very opposite spirit to this. That is what he rebukes here. He does not mean to affirm their spirituality. He does not mean that a man has to look at himself and ask whether he is spiritual, before he can realize ability to restore another. The spirit of meekness is the very opposite of such fancied spirituality. The spiritual man is too near Christ to believe in himself; to walk in that presence has, as its surest mark, the spirit of lowliness; and if the Spirit of God bear witness in our souls in a practical way, it will not be to puff us up with the idea of Christ-likeness, but, on the contrary, to point out to us where we are unlike Him; yet here there is no spirit of discouragement or despair engendered. If we have once learned the true judgment of ourselves before God as the cross gives it to us, we shall not expect to find anything in ourselves, and therefore shall not be disappointed; yet our resource is at hand, our strength is in Another, "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are filled up in Him." There can be no want then to us, and there can be no self-confidence in those whose habitual resort is to this fountain of supply. The spirit of meekness, therefore, will go with true spirituality. Let them show it, he urges, in that way. Let them "bear one another's burdens,"* so they would fulfil the law of Christ, who Himself assuredly was the great burden Bearer. On the other hand, if a man thought himself to be something when nothing (when did he ever think himself to be something without being nothing?) he would deceive himself. He adds now a word against those who were, in contradiction to his own principle, building upon another man's foundations, and indeed, rather destroying those foundations, than building upon them. "Let every man," he says, "approve his own work and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another." In the end, every one would bear his own burden.* Every Christian must at last take up his own responsibility before God, as we know. Every one must give account of himself to God. It will be the triumph of divine grace to be able to do it after the fashion in which we shall do it; and yet, nevertheless, there is enough in the thought for the utmost seriousness.

* These are two different words in the original.

5 (6-10): The reaping as the sowing.

5. Now let him that is [b]taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not [c]deceived: [d]God is not mocked; for [e]whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that [f]soweth to his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that [g]soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not [h]lose heart in practising what is right: for in its own season we [i]shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have [j]opportunity, let us work what is good toward all; and [k]especially toward those who are of the household of faith.

b 1 Cor. 9. 7-15. *cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 18.
c Jas. 1. 16. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 33.
d *cf.* Prov. 1. 24-26.
e *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10-13.
f *cf.* Hos. 8. 7. *cf.* Hos. 10. 13. *cf.* Job. 4. 8. *cf.* Gen. 19. 36-38.
g *cf.* Hos. 10. 12; *cf.* Matt. 13. 23.
h 1 Cor. 15. 58; 2 Thess. 3. 13; *cf.* Jer. 8. 4.
i *cf.* Ps. 126. 5, 6; *cf.* Jas. 5. 7, 8.
j *cf.* Prov. 3. 27, 28.
k *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17; *cf.* Rom. 12. 13.

5. He enters now upon the subject, which this opens, of divine government, a thing which is not, as we know, in the slightest contradiction with divine grace. These are things which are sometimes put as if in some sense contrary to one another; but, on the other hand, the government of God for us is expressly a Father's government, while it is, none the less, that of One who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work. This is, of course, a thing of the present, not of the future. The future judgment, whether with regard to saint or sinner, is in the hands of Christ. "God hath committed all judgment to Him because He is the Son of Man," but there is a government which is, none the less, the government of grace, because it is one absolutely intolerant of evil. We may repeat again that the toleration of evil is never grace. It would be a perversion of the very thought of grace to imagine this. "Be not deceived," he says, therefore, "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." These are principles of absolute necessity. Nothing can alter them. If a man sows a certain seed, he knows, or he should know, that he can get of that seed nothing but what is proper to it. If a man sows to his flesh, he sows, in fact, the corruption which he reaps. The very principle of self-will which must, of necessity, be in it, is a principle which is essentially that of sin. Every form of sin will come under this, and God may allow, in fact, such seed to come to harvest, in order that we may recognize its character, as we otherwise would not do. In the opposite way to that of the man who, bearing good seed, goes forth even weeping, but returns with joy, a man in this way may sow his seed rejoicing, but it will be the return that will be sorrowful. It does not follow that God cannot come in and deliver us from what would otherwise be the necessary fruit of such sowing, if only there be the true self-judgment of it in the soul; for to a Christian, the reaping of it is but in order to self-judgment, and if we will judge it first, there may be no need of reaping at all. Judge it first or last we surely must, or the thing will develop for what it is and be manifest, not to ourselves alone it may be, but to others also. On the other hand, "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Blessed and wonderful reaping! The life is looked at here, of course, in its practical character, in its fruits and activities. The life itself, the life which produces this, is no matter of reaping at all, it is what we must have to be Christians. Nevertheless, we can reap it as a practical thing, and the witness of it is that, even though reaped here upon earth, it is something which has eternity in it. All that which in us here is the fruit of the divine work has necessarily its link with eternity. It is for eternity that we are preparing. There is not even just that sharp division between the present and the future for us which we are apt so to imagine. It is eternity that God has before Him, it is the things eternal with which we are conversant day by day. It is eternity, therefore, that imprints its character upon the present. It is the life

6 (11-14): The end of the world for us in the cross.

6. See in what a [l]long letter* I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a [m]fair show in the flesh, these are compelling you to be circumcised, only that they may not be [n]persecuted for the cross of Christ. For [o]neither do they that are circumcised themselves keep the law; but they [p]desire you to be circumcised, that they may [q]glory in your flesh. But [r]far be it from me to glory, save in the [s]cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby† the [t]world is crucified to me, and [u]I unto the world.

7 (15-18): The perfect rule, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

7. For [v]in Christ Jesus‡ neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but [w]new creation. And as many as shall walk by [x]this rule, [y]peace be on them, and [z]mercy, and upon the [a]Israel of God. For the rest, let no man [b]trouble me, for I bear in my body the [c]brands of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the [d]grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

* Or, "in what large letters." † Or, "by whom."
‡ The great weight of textual authority is for this (in Christ Jesus) though the editors in general reject it.

l cf. 2 Thess. 3. 17. *ctr.* Rom. 16. 22.
m cf. Phil. 3. 4-6. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26-29.
n ch. 5. 11.
o cf. Jno. 7. 19. *cf.* Rom. 2. 25.
p cf. Acts 15. 1 with ch. 4. 17.
q ctr. Phil. 3. 3.
r cf. Phil. 3. 8.
s cf. 1 Cor. 1. 18. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 2.
t cf. Jno. 12. 31. ch. 2. 20. *cf.* ch. 1. 4.
u cf. Col. 2 20. *cf.* Jno. 17. 9 15.
v ch. 5. 6. *w cf.* Eph. 2. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17; *cf.* Rev. 3. 14. *x ctr.* ch. 4. 10; *ctr.* Col. 2. 21; *cf* Col. 3. 10. *y ctr.* ch. 1. 9; *cf.* ch. 1. 3; *cf.* Jno. 14. 27. *z cf.* Heb. 4. 16. *a cf.* Rom. 9. 6-8; *cf* Rom. 4. 12. *b cf.* Jno. 20. 17; *cf.* ver. 14. *c cf.* ch. 2. 20; *cf.* Col. 1. 24. *d* 1 Cor. 16. 23.

everlasting which we live practically now, and let us not then, says the apostle, be "weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." The path is through a world of trial, and therefore, though in itself all well doing has its own delight, yet the opposition to it from the world through which we pass will surely give us need of such an encouragement as this. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially," he adds, "unto them who are of the household of faith." This ends very much the practical test which he has been making of the two principles which we have seen in opposition all the way through the epistle. All the way through it is a controversy, and one from which we need not expect to escape while we are here. God's principles lead into conflict, and, alas, not merely with the men of the world, but, it may be, as here, with the children of God themselves.

6. In the earnestness of his desire for them, the apostle, contrary to his wont, has penned all this epistle with his own hand. His custom was simply to put a salutation from his hand at the end; but in this case, he could not, as it were, trust another, or was not free to dictate to another the things that were in his heart. It was not with him, as with those of whom he was writing, a fair show in the flesh that he was making. He was not wanting followers, nor, as they, to escape persecution for the cross of Christ. He charges them openly with this. They did not keep the law, they could not but be conscious of that. Their desire to have others circumcised was simply that they might glory in their flesh. For him all that was ended. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ had closed for him the whole scene here; and in it the world it was that was crucified, and he himself to the world. The character of the world was thus stamped upon it. The cross was for him a shadow resting upon it. If it had judged and cast out Christ, he who was identified with Christ before God, and had learned to identify himself thus, was one whom they had crucified.

7. Christ was beyond it all. He had seen Him, Head of a new creation; in Him circumcision availed nothing now, nor uncircumcision. These had nothing to do with new creation. They belonged to the world, to the fallen world. The Christian walk was outside them altogether, not after the Jewish pattern of legality nor the Gentile pattern of lawlessness. There was a new rule,—a rule which made a man "a pilgrim and a stranger" here, the rule of belonging to

this other scene in which already the glory of Christ was displayed. In the light of that he walked, and for such as do so he desires and pronounces upon them "peace and mercy," (mercy of which they still had need) "and upon the Israel of God"—the true Israelite,* not the fleshly one. Here then, the matter rested for him. None need trouble him more. He bore already in his body the "brands of the Lord Jesus," the brands of trials and sufferings undergone for Christ and which marked him as the bondman of Christ in the joyful apprehension of the love that had been shown. He closes with the constant benediction that was in his heart: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

* That is, the natural descendants of Abraham who were also spiritual.—S. R.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF EPHESIANS.

THE epistle to the Ephesians carries us to the height of Christian position. It is, as we well know, the epistle of the heavenly places. Christ is seated there, and we are seated together in Him. The very scene of our conflict is in the heavenly places. In this there is a correspondence, as has been noticed long since, between it and the book of Joshua. Just as Israel had to gain possession practically of that which was their own by God's gift, so are we taught here to get possession of that which is our own in the heavens. The height of our outlook in it gives us a wider range of truth than we could have had before,—in fact, the widest.

It is true that Romans, in the announcement of our place in Christ before God, virtually involves the heavenly position; but this is not worked out in it. We have in Romans the Head of new creation, in Galatians the new creation itself, but only briefly indicated. In Ephesians we get, in a sense, beyond this. The new creation is in contrast, as its Head is, with the old creation and the first Adam; but here we have *all* things headed up in Christ, things "which are in heaven and which are in earth." We look backward to see God's purpose toward us before the world was. We look forward to see God's grace manifested to the principalities and powers in heavenly places in "His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus," and to divine glory manifested in the Church through Christ Jesus throughout the ages. Thus we have the widest scope of view anywhere in the New Testament.

The earth side, if I may so say, of our position, as Romans and Galatians have shown it to us, is omitted. We have neither "dead to sin" nor "to the law," nor "crucified to the world" here; but we are created in Christ Jesus, quickened with Him, raised up together and made to sit together in Him in the heavenly places. This is what is ours individually, which prepares the way for the development of the truth as to the Church. We have, first of all, to see that the bride of Christ is of His kindred, as Abraham required that the bride of Isaac should be. Thus, we have at the very beginning what is individual and which prepares the way to consider our corporate position as united to Christ by the Spirit and made members of His body as well as the habitation of God in the Spirit. This is the full revelation now of that

which had been a mystery hid in God from the ages and generations throughout all the age-times, and Paul himself is the special minister of this to bring men into the fulness of the blessing. It is in the latter part, in connection with our responsibility in our earth relationships, that there is developed the relation of the Church to Christ as His bride, the Eve of the Last Adam.

Everything in Ephesians, as we might expect in an epistle of this character, is based upon the will of God, which all the way through is prominently brought before us. He has "chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before Him in love," which is His own nature; we are "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself;" that is "according to the good pleasure of His will." He might have had us in other relationships than this, although in any we must have been according to the requirement of His perfect nature, but He is acting in all this for the glory of His grace to manifest Himself to all His creatures, a purpose which is in itself a purpose of grace. It is the necessity of a love which must find expression; and which fills and satisfies, as it alone can satisfy, the hearts of those to whom it is revealed.

The principalities and powers in heavenly places are not overlooked, but have their own blessing in this revelation of grace to others than themselves. God's glorifying Himself is nothing less than the pouring out of that which is in Himself, and it is in this divine fulness manifested in Christ towards us that we are filled up. The Spirit of God here is the seal of all this blessing, and, as the Spirit of adoption, the Witness to us that we are the children of God, we have the pledge of the inheritance of children. "If sons, then heirs."

Here then comes association with Him who is Himself primarily the Heir of all. For Him the universe was created and He fashions it all for eternity according to God, Himself the First-Born among many brethren. Thus we are brought, of necessity, into the closest relationship to Christ. There could be nothing closer than the relation of a body to the Head. "We are the fulness" or "complement," says the apostle, "of Him that filleth all in all;" and, as the members of His body, we are to be those through whom He works out His mind throughout eternity: for the body, as is plain, is the instrument of the mind, and the Spirit of God is that which unites and energizes the whole together for this purpose. This is not a transitory blessing. It is not something connected simply with this world, but in this world we are growing up in all things to the perfect manhood, to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The practical results are, of course, dwelt upon here, as elsewhere, and the conflict which we have here is not, as in Romans, or Galatians, with the flesh, but with the "principalities and powers," the rulers of the darkness of this world; the whole aim of Satan in this being to keep us out of the practical possession of that which he knows God has destined us for. We see here, therefore, what the apostle tells us elsewhere was his aim, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Clearly, Ephesians fills, in an admirable way, the third place. It is the sanctuary opened to us, not for worship simply, as in Hebrews, but that we may take possession of it. Our blessings are altogether in contrast with those of Israel; we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings," but "in heavenly places in Christ."

The divisions are six:

1. (Chap. i. 1–14.) God's purpose in Christ as Source of all blessings to us and the Head of all things.
2. (Chaps. i. 15–ii. 10.) Our participation with Christ in God's work beyond death.
3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iv. 16.) The church mystery, the house of God and the body of Christ.
4. (Chaps. iv. 17–v. 21.) The ways that suit this.
5. (Chaps. v. 22–vi. 9.) Our responsibilities in those earthly relationships through which the heavenly ones also shine.
6. (Chap. vi. 10–24.) The conflict and the way of victory.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–14.)

God's purpose in Christ as source of all blessing to us and Head of all things.

1 (1-6): Our predestination as sons to the Father.

1. PAUL, an [a]apostle of Jesus Christ, by the [b]will of God, to the saints which are at [c]Ephesus,* and to the [d]faithful in Christ Jesus. [e]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 2 Cor. 1.1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9 with 2 Cor. 12. 11, 12.
b *cf.* Gal. 1.1, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor 1.1. *cf.* Acts 9. 15.
c *cf.* Acts 19. 1, etc. *cf.* Acts 20. 17-38. *cf.* Rev. 2. 1-7.
d *cf.* Rev. 2. 11. *cf.* Gal. 6.16.
e Rom. 1. 7. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 2.

* Many omit, "at Ephesus," and suggest that the epistle was either a general one, or that referred to in Col. iv. 16. But the words should evidently be retained.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

As already said, in Ephesians we have, first of all, our individual blessing, and this in its highest character; the fruit, also, of God's purpose in Christ towards us, which is the display of Himself in His own nature; and not simply even for "the glory of His grace," but in result for "the praise of His glory." The apostle announces himself at the outset as an "apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." He is acting in his divinely commissioned place, to declare that which, as elsewhere we find him saying, is the completion of Scripture truth, and the declaration of mysteries hidden from ages and generations and now revealed. He writes to the saints at Ephesus as to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." We have already seen that Ephesus evidently has in the New Testament a representative place with regard to the Church at large. We are here, therefore, to have the full church character given to it; yet he writes not to the church at Ephesus, but to the saints as individuals. The individual blessing comes first, and must come first. We are members of Christ only by the gift of the Spirit, but we must be first prepared of the Spirit in order to receive this gift, the temple that He is to inhabit must first be built. He could not seal flesh, nor man in sin. The bride of Christ, as already said, must be of the kindred, and therefore we have that here which first of all links us with the essential blessing of all the saints before. The "faithful in Christ Jesus" may make us realize in the Ephesians a condition of soul which prepared them to receive the truth which was now to be communicated. It is plain that in the case, for instance, of the Corinthians or of the Galatians, he was hindered by the condition of soul in those to whom he was writing. In Corinthians he does, indeed, give us the Church as the body of Christ, but he does not carry us up to the heavenly places, but simply develops the practical working of the church on earth. Here he is unhindered. It is a point to be well understood by us that we cannot learn scripture truth as we might learn any other, that there must be a condition of soul corresponding to the truth revealed. There must be hearts open to receive and to take the impress of the truth revealed. There must be a state towards God of those who are whole hearted in their desire to be subject to His mind. To these he begins with his usual salutation: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

1. He begins, then, with the praise which fills his heart as he thinks of that which is the portion of the saints. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

/Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *g*hath blessed us with all* spiritual blessings in the *h*heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath *i*chosen us in him before the foundation of the

/ *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 3. *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* ch. 3. 14 with John 20. 17.

g *cf.* Col. 1. 12. 13.

* Or, "Every spiritual blessing."

cf. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23; *cf.* Rom. 8. 29-32. *h* ver. 20; ch. 2. 6; ch. 3. 10; ch. 6. 12; *cf.* Josh. 1. 2, 3; *ctr.* Deut. 28. 1-13. *i* 2 Thess. 2. 13; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2; *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It is the Father's will, the Father's love to which all is referred here; Christ the One in whom there is the accomplishment of this. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," suggests, as the Lord has taught us, our own twofold relationship to Him as that. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ" implies the Man Christ Jesus down here in the place of weakness, to work out His will, to whom God must be God, who walks in the path of faith like no other man, only in the perfection which belongs to Him; but then His God is His Father, and, as this, our Father also, although there is a peculiar sense, of course, in which, as the "Only Begotten Son" He fills such a place. As the "Only Begotten," He is alone and must ever be alone. As the "First Born," He is in necessary connection with others who are not merely naturally but spiritually born. Thus, the Lord says in His message through Mary Magdalene, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." It has been often noted that the Lord does not say here to *our* Father and to *our* God. He preserves, as a matter of necessity, the peculiar place which is His, and yet He brings us, by virtue of what He is, into relationships which are characterized by His relationship. "My Father" and therefore "your Father;" "My God" and therefore "your God." God has One now in whom He can perfectly reveal Himself. In the Old Testament He was the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. These three, as we have seen in the book of Exodus, are those specially chosen, as, in the place they fill, giving us to know God in a distinct way. In the God of Abraham, in fact, we see the Father, just because and as in Isaac the one yielded up to death and yet brought out of it, we see the Son. The God of Jacob gives us, on the other hand, the thought of the Spirit. Jacob transformed into Israel is the typical presentation of the Spirit's work. Thus God had in some way identified Himself with these three men, but now there are and can be none associated with Christ after this manner. He is the One in whom God is displayed and He displays Him fully and perfectly. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is God perfectly revealed, and it is He who "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Notice how we are entitled, therefore, to go back through all the Old Testament scriptures and to claim every spiritual blessing that we find there as our own. We do not take them from those to whom they belonged. Those blessings declare the character of God who is now revealed to us and who has blessed us in Christ. No character of blessing, therefore, can be wanting to us. If God says to Joshua: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," we may, as the apostle tells us, claim that promise fully, although there could scarcely perhaps be one which might be considered more incidental to the peculiar place which Joshua occupied. But "all spiritual blessings" then are ours, only that the sphere to which they belong, with which they connect us, is heavenly and not earthly. There is no conflict, therefore, with Israel's blessings; although, surely, their highest blessings must be spiritual also, but they are in earthly places, not in heavenly. Christ is the storehouse of these blessings for us. He is the One who by His work in our behalf justifies their bestowal. Nay, we may say, even necessitates it, for the moment we see Christ as Man here upon earth, the fullest blessing of man is certainly implied for him. "If God spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" "All spiritual blessings" then are ours. We only need faith to claim them and enjoy them. Unbelief may, alas,

world, that we should be [j]holy and [k]without blame before him in [l]love; having [m]predestinated * us unto [n]adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good [o]pleasure of his will, to the [p]praise of the glory of his grace, in † which he hath taken us into [q]favor in the [r]beloved.

2 (7-12): Redeemed and brought into fellowship with Him.

2. In whom we have [s]redemption, through his [t]blood, the [u]forgiveness of trespasses, according to the [v]riches

* Or, "marked us out." † Many read, "which He hath bestowed on us."

j cf. Col. 1. 22. *k* cf. ch. 5. 27. cf. Jude 24. cf. Song 4. 7. *l* cf. 1 Jno. 4. 16. *m* Rom. 8. 29, 30. cf. Acts 13. 48. *n* cf. Gal. 4. 5, 6. cf. Rom. 8. 15.

o ver. 9; cf. Rom. 9. 20-24; cf. Rev. 4. 11; cf. Jas. 1. 18. *p* vers. 12, 14; cf. Rev. 1. 5, 6. *q* cf. Rom. 5. 2. *r* Matt. 3. 17; Jno. 3. 35; cf. Col. 1. 13. *s* Col. 1. 14; cf. Rom. 3. 24; cf. Heb. 9. 12, 15. *t* cf. Rev. 5. 9; cf. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *u* cf. Acts 13. 38, 39; cf. 1 Jno. 2. 12. *v* cf. ch. 2. 4; cf. ch. 3. 8, 16; cf. Col. 1. 27; cf. Col. 2. 3; cf. Rom. 2. 4.

make us poor still, shaming the One whom we should glorify by the manifestation of the blessing that is ours. Nevertheless, the blessings abide permanently for His people, and it is, of course, impossible that for any of these there could be the final loss of that which is thus secured; but this makes the apostle look back to eternity before ever the world was, to that will of God to which we owe our all. He has chosen us in Him before the world was. This world, so large and important as it is often in our thoughts, yet is after all that which has, as it were, come in by the way, and is a step in order to His fulfilment of these eternal blessings; but the first thing that we find here is that we must, therefore, be according to His own nature, and here, too, the guard of His holiness is first named: "That we should be holy and without blame before Him"—then His full character—"in love." We must answer thus to what He is if we are to be blessed at all. It is not, therefore, said here, "According to the good pleasure of His will." That comes in the next place when He speaks of our predestination, our appointment to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. There it is His will merely to which we owe this. If He had servants of His power, they must answer to His nature; not, of course, that He cannot overrule the evil which has come in through sin and make sinful men the instrument of His pleasure, but this is not in question here. It is that which comes from His own heart, not that which displays His power merely, and thus there must be what corresponds to what is in His own heart. Because of what we are, this is to the praise of the glory of His grace. It is grace and grace alone that can bring into the highest place, and this grace has been shown us in the Beloved. The apostle does not say in Christ simply here, but wants to make us realize the fulness of delight which God has in Him in whom we are accepted. Thus the result must be the praise of the glory of His grace. Suited it is that those creatures of His who are to find the very highest place with Him are those thus redeemed from sin. It makes the place itself the display of what God is in a way which nothing else could do. If God is acting in grace, if He is free to show out what is in His heart, then it is what is due to Himself, we may say, that He will manifest, not what is due to us or to any of His creatures, but due to Himself, and thus the fullest blessing must result from it. Christ, "the Beloved" is, as we know, the pledge of all this.

2. He points out now, therefore, the grace side of things. In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Let us notice that He does not speak of justification here nor in the epistle anywhere. It is not the suited term, although one peculiarly Paul's, but as another has said: "God does not justify His own work," and we are looked at here in that character. Yet there must be redemption, the taking out of the condition in which we were as sinners in the power of that blood shed, which was the necessary price, but therefore the forgiveness of sins is according to the riches* of His grace.

* How suggestive this word "riches" is, not merely of the exhaustless wealth of God's store, but, by contrast, of that poverty in us which had nothing, having "spent all." We were, and in ourselves still are, poor indeed, but this emphasizes the grace that has opened its wondrous riches to us.—S. R.

of his grace; which he hath made to [w]abound towards us in all [x]wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the [y]mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he [z]purposed in himself, for the administration of the [a]fulness of times, to [b]head up all things in Christ, things in the [c]heavens and things upon the [d]earth; in him in whom also we have obtained an [e]inheritance, being predestinated* according to the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the [f]counsel of his own will, that we should be to the [g]praise of his glory who have [h]trusted beforehand in Christ.

w *cf.* Rom. 5. 20. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 14.
x *cf.* ch. 3. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 21.
y *cf.* Rom. 16. 25, 26. *cf.* ch. 3. 3.
z vers. 5, 11. *cf.* Is. 42. 1.
a *cf.* Gal. 4. 4. *cf.* Heb. 9. 26. *cf.* Rev. 22. 10. *ctr.* Lk. 21. 24.
b *cf.* Col. 1. 16, 20.

* Or, "marked out."

cf. Phil. 2. 9, 10. c *cf.* Col. 2. 10; *cf.* ch. 4. 10; ver. 22. d *cf.* Ezek. 21. 27; *cf.* Is. 49. 6; *cf.* Ps. 72. 8–11. e *cf.* Rom. 8. 17; *cf.* Heb. 1. 14 with 1 Pet. 1. 4. f *cf.* Dan. 4. 35; *cf.* Is. 40. 14; *cf.* Is. 46. 10. g vers. 6, 14. ch. 3. 21; ch. 2. 7. h *cf.* Rom. 4. 3 with Jno. 8. 56; *cf.* Rom. 11. 5 with Rom. 11. 26.

It is not *mere* forgiveness, as it were. There is the overflow of goodness in it; and it is added that according to this "He hath abounded toward us now in all wisdom and intelligence." He has come out to make known to us that which is ours that we may enjoy it according to His mind. He does not reveal what He would not have us enjoy, but He has not merely revealed to us that which is our own blessing, we are made to know the fulness of His purpose which has Christ as its Object. He has made known to us "the mystery of His will," that is the secret of it not hitherto declared, "according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might head up in One all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." This large and general purpose we do not find, therefore, in the Old Testament. Christ is the glorious King of Israel, the Ruler of the nations of the earth, but the promises of the Old Testament do not go beyond the earth; they belong, as Romans has told us, to Israel, to the apostle's kindred according to the flesh. Here we have what is much wider. Christ is to be Head over all, the fullest security of blessing to all, that could be. All things are to be in His hand when, in the wisdom of God, the time has arrived for Him to put forth His hand and take them. Even now He sits upon the Father's throne, but there, as is clear, in retirement in a certain sense. He has had necessarily to come down first into the lower parts of the earth to the death of the cross, in order that God might be glorified with regard to everything and perfect power over sin might be realized, it might be no barrier to blessing any more. Thus we can understand that at His first coming, Christ could not take the power which was His. The secret of the present delay has to do with us. He is gathering, as we shall see, a people who are to be trained in His school upon earth, in order to inherit with Him that which in grace He shares with them. Thus, the delay has respect to us, is in our behalf, and the whole truth as to the Church comes in in this place. So the apostle goes on immediately to say therefore that, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ." If He speaks of Christ's inheritance there must be the co-heirs, and that is what, during all this time of patience in which evil is so prevalent and good seems almost to be baffled, God is working out by it all that needed discipline which is to make us, as exercised with regard to good and evil, participators in the mind of Christ and instruments in His hand finally. How wonderful a purpose this that we should be not merely to the praise of the glory of His grace, but "to the praise of His glory." The praise of the glory of His grace contemplates the low, sinful estate of those whom He raises up to manifest it in, but "the praise of His glory" contemplates the wonderful

3 (13, 14): Sealed with the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance.

3. In whom [i]ye also [trusted], having [j]heard the word of truth, the [k]gospel of your salvation; in whom also believing, ye were [l]sealed with the Holy Spirit of [m]promise, which is the [n]earnest of our inheritance, until* the [o]redemption of the purchased possession, to the [p]praise of his glory.

* Some read, "unto," connecting with "sealed."

15. 1-4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 2; *cf.* Acts 13. 38, 39. *l* ch. 4. 30; 2 Cor. 1. 22; *cf.* Lev. 14. 14, 17; *cf.* Esth. 8. 8 with Rom. 8. 9. *m cf.* Acts 1. 4 with Jno. 14. 16, 17. *n* 2 Cor. 5. 5; *cf.* Rom. 8. 23; *cf.* Num. 13. 23; *cf.* Rom. 5. 5. *o cf.* Rev. 12. 9-11; *cf.* Col. 3. 4. *p* vers. 6, 12.

i cf. ch. 2. 1, 11. *cf.* Acts 11. 18.
j cf. Acts 15. 7. *cf.* Acts 16. 31, 32. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 23 with Rom. 10. 17.
k cf. 1 Cor.

condition into which they are brought and seated with Christ, and here he shows us that those in Israel who through grace have anticipated what will be the faith finally of the nation ("we who first trusted in Christ") are to find an infinitely greater blessing than anything that they have lost through Israel's failure.

3. He now turns to the Gentiles, as these Ephesians were. The "we" and "ye" all through the epistle, as we have seen in Galatians also, mark out the difference. "In whom therefore," he adds, "ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The Gentiles come in on equal footing with these Jewish first-fruits, and they have, in consequence, by that Spirit which is theirs, the Holy Spirit of promise, the seal of that condition of sonship, which is the pledge that they shall be heirs also. It is "the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise," again, "of His glory." He is now the earnest. Necessarily, that character will cease when we have the inheritance itself: not the seal of the Spirit itself, which would be a loss indeed, if it were possible to us, but it is, of course, only in this way that the habitation of God abides for eternity. God will not give it up. Let us notice that the seal of the Spirit is simply that which is put upon faith in Christ, and that the "after that ye believed" is really too strong. It implies no necessary interval. "In whom having believed, ye were sealed." The sealing marks us out for God, but it is that also which, as doing this, brings in God to preserve that which is His own, and thus it is the assurance of absolute security. We are in a world in which our feebleness is, alas, continually manifest. It is God's grace, therefore, that thus takes upon Himself, as we may say, the responsibility of our being brought through. In the Spirit which He has given us He has pledged Himself to this; so Peter also, having told us that we are "begotten again to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven," adds that "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto (final) salvation" (1 Pet. i. 3–5). Here is the power of God in the Holy Spirit of power, the One who, as we have seen, dwells in the very bodies of the saints, in order to make good there, in that which is the very sign of our weakness, and which as yet does not share in the blessing of redemption, the purpose of God.

Let us notice again the peculiar expression here: "redemption of the purchased possession," which, of course, means our inheritance; but thus our inheritance needed to be purchased and needs to be redeemed. This is the first time that we have come to such an intimation. We have what is similar in Colossians, "the reconciliation of things in earth and things in heaven" (Col. i. 20), and in Heb. ix. 23 the heavenly things are seen as having to be purified by sacrifice. This is a mystery to many, the thought of "things," not simply persons, needing the work of Christ in order that God's purposes may be fulfilled as to them; but in fact, everything has waited for the glorification of God as to sin to be accomplished. Satan himself is thus in the heavenly places, not cast down, and when we look forward to the actual time when this shall take place, as the book of Revelation declares it to us, we find that the completion of God's victory over evil has waited and still waits for His purpose towards man to be fulfilled. Whatever we might think, the nature of God is

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. i. 15–ii. 10.)

Our participation with Christ in God's work beyond death.

1 (i. 15-23): Divine power toward us in Christ our Head.

1. WHEREFORE, I also, after I [q]heard of the [r]faith in the Lord Jesus which is in you and the [s]love which [ye have] towards all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention [of you] in my

[q] Col. 1. 4, etc. 1 Thess. 1. 2, 3.
[r] Rom. 1. 8. *cf.* ch. 2. 8.
[s] *cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 9, 10. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 22. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 14.

such that there could not be tolerated the smallest question as to what He is. Sin has raised questions which must be fully met and answered, which the work of Christ has met, before God could lay hold even of the heavenly places themselves, in which we know sin has been, to renew them according to His eternal purpose. There is no question, of course, of the purification or reconciliation of the fallen angels, yet even so judgment alone upon them could not sufficiently vindicate Him. He cannot, in fact, be vindicated by judgment merely. Judgment may show His righteousness, but not His heart, and the question has gone deeper than with regard to righteousness. Christ's work alone has shown, not merely His holiness with regard to sin, but His love also, and thus still there is a certain delay of the fulfilment of His purpose which has been already spoken of.* He is free now to work out the restoration which is in His mind. Thus, as we have seen in Romans, the groaning creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the possession which is ours in the heavenly places needed that purchase price to be paid for it, not because of those who were to be put in possession, but because of the question which sin has raised even there. The purchase is completed, but the redemption remains to be accomplished yet. "Purchase" and "redemption" are very distinct things, although the same work is necessary in each case; but redemption is the actual bringing out of the evil condition which, we may reverently say, the purchase gives God title to do. If we look on to the twelfth of Revelation, we shall find there that when the man child is taken up to heaven, the dragon and his angels are cast down. That is the redemption. The man child, no doubt, includes both the One who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and those also who are expressly promised to share this power with Him (Rev. xii. 16, 17). Thus, during all the time in which we wait, the Spirit of God, the Witness of the glory of Him whose work has been accomplished, is here for the guarding of the fulfilment of these purposes of blessing.

Div. 2.

We have had, then, the general outline of God's purpose in Christ, not merely towards us, but embracing the subjection of all things to Him. We are now to see how He has, in fact, taken us up to link us with Christ for the fulfilment of blessing.

1. It takes the form of a prayer from the apostle's heart in behalf of those whom he is addressing. He longs for them and for us that we may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation with regard to all these things. In fact, how much has been hidden in this way through the lack of response on the part of God's people to these wonderful communications! He has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love to all the saints. He gives thanks, therefore, for them, but that is not enough. He realizes that they are yet in a world in which Satan is busy, as by and by he will more fully show, to deprive the people of God of that which, in their knowledge of it now, would be power for them to glorify God in the scene through which they are passing. It is here, in fact, in the entering into these purposes of God, that the Christian character is prac-

* May there not also be the suggestion that all sin penetrates even heaven? God is in relation with man, and therefore all sin of man reaches His holy presence; as the tabernacle, God's dwelling-place in Israel, was defiled by the uncleanness of the people and needed to be purged by blood (Lev. xvi. 16). When all things are finished, and the purging by power takes place, the full redemption will have been effected.—S. R.

'prayers, that the [u]God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the [v]Father of glory, would give you the spirit of [w]wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, having the eyes of your [x]heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the [y]hope of his calling [and] what the [z]riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his [a]power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power [in] which he [b]wrought in Christ, raising him from among the dead; and he made him to [c]sit at his right

t ch.3.14-19. Col. 1. 9. *cf.* 2 Tim.1. 3. *cf.* Acts 6.4. *u* ver. 3. *cf.* Jno. 20. 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 23. *v cf.* Acts 7. 2. *cf.* 2 Cor.4.6. *w cf.* Col. 3. 16. *cf.* Lk. 24. 45. *x cf.* Acts 26. 18; *ctr.* ch. 4. 18; *ctr.* Matt. 13. 19. *y* ch. 4. 4; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14, 20; *cf.* Gal.5. 5; *cf.* 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10. *z cf.* ch. 3. 16; *cf.* Phil. 4. 19; *cf.* Ex. 15. 17 with Rev. 21. 7. *a cf.* ch. 3.20; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *b* Col. 2. 12; Acts 2. 24; *cf.* ch. 2. 1; *cf.* Rom. 6. 4. *c* Ps. 110. 1; *cf.* Phil. 2. 9; *cf.* ch. 2. 6.

tically acquired, and the Christian intelligence alone fully gained. It is no wonder, therefore, if here should be the sharpest possible contention, and that here the apostle should be in prayer that God's people should lose nothing of that which He has designed for them. Accordingly, the prayer is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, the One who has purposed all this, and the One to whom belongs the power alone to accomplish it. He prays that this God may give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the "full knowledge," (as it should be) of Him. The deepest, sweetest character of the revelation of these things is that it gives the knowledge of Himself. For this we need, as he explains directly, the "eyes of our heart" to be enlightened. It is "heart," not "mind," for in the heart such eyes really are. It is not mere intelligence that can possess itself of these things. It is not any brightness of mind merely, as people would say. It is the heart for what is revealed that will lead to right intelligence as to the revelation. Could God possibly reveal these things with all their announced value for the soul, so that a human heart would kindle with desire to possess itself of them, only to find that the faculty had been denied of obtaining that which was sought for? How impossible to think of it! God's people deprive themselves of what is the inheritance of every one of them, and they must, of necessity, connive at their being robbed of it, in order not to know. The Spirit of revelation, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding is in them already, and, as the apostle pictures it, it is the Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God. Can He do it in one and not in another? Or, if He be pleased still to have special human instruments, does He mean by that to deny the possession of the truth to any who seek it? Certainly, it would be impossible to think so. The apostle prays, therefore, that they might know what was the hope of this calling of God, that is, of all that, in fact, is hailing us from those blessed scenes which God is opening up to us, and that they might know what the riches are of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. It is God's inheritance. No possession of it on our part could possibly deprive Him of what is in it, and how little would it be true inheritance if we did not inherit it with Him! It is God that inherits what is His, but it is the saints whom He puts in possession, just as He puts Israel in possession of the land which, nevertheless, He reserves as His, and which, therefore, cannot be taken away from Him. "The land is Mine," He says: "ye are strangers and sojourners,"—guests therefore, as such, thrown upon the goodness and liberality of Him who, as such, is entertaining them,—"ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." We inherit after the same manner: a blessed thing to know that it is not the inheritance of a lost Father, but the inheritance of One who dwells with us in it, that belongs to us. But He desires that we should know also the greatness of His power which is working towards us with regard to these very things, according to the working of the might of His strength. How He multiplies words that we might realize the energy that is at work, a power in which He has wrought in Christ; for the work done in Him is

hand in the heavenly places, far [d]above all principalities and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in [e]this age, but also in that which is to [f]come; and he hath put all things [g]under his feet and gave him to be [h]head over all things to the church which is his [i]body, the [j]fulness of him who [k]filleth all in all.

2 (ii. 1–3): Our previous fellowship.

2. And [l]you [hath he quickened] who were [m]dead in trespasses and sins, wherein ye once [n]walked, according to the course* of this [o]world, according to the

d ch. 4. 10. *cf.* Col. 2. 10, 15. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 22. *cf.* Rev. 5. 8, 9.
e *cf.* Matt. 12. 32. *cf.* ch. 3. 10.
f *cf.* ch. 2. 7. *cf.* Matt. 25. 31, etc.
g Ps. 8. 6. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Heb. 2. 8. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18.

* Or, "age."

h ch. 4. 15; ch. 5. 23; Col. 1. 18; Col. 2. 19. *i cf.* 1 Cor. 12, etc; *cf.* ch. 2. 16; *cf* ch. 4. 4, 12, 16; *cf.* ch. 5. 22-32; *cf.* Col. 1. 18, 24; *cf.* Rom. 12. 5; *cf.* Acts 9. 4. *j cf.* Gen. 2. 18; *cf.* ch. 3. 21. *k* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* Col. 2. 9, 10, *l* ch. 1. 13; ver. 11; Col. 2. 13; ver. 5. *m cf.* Jno. 11. 14; *cf.* Lk. 15. 24; *cf.* ch. 4. 18. *n cf.* Phil. 3. 18; *cf.* Rom. 3. 15–17. *o cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 15–17; *cf.* Rom. 12. 2.

done for us all, and the good of it belongs to us all. God has raised Christ from the dead then, and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. The work is perfectly accomplished, and He only awaits the full answer to it on the part of God. The present answer is only the pledge of the full carrying out of all. His place is already above every principality and power and dominion and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. He has put all things under His feet. Here it is the One then who has in His own hand the fulness of blessing for us, and this accomplishment already with regard to Him must have its present bearing upon our condition also, even while we are here in the world. God has given Him, in fact, to be Head over all things to the assembly which is His body,—Head over all things, which is that inheritance itself of which Paul has been speaking. He is Head in the full power of such a place to the assembly. All that is implied by the place He has, implies the blessing which is to be to the Church, united as it is to Him now in the nearest way that could be attained—His body; the apostle does not hesitate to add "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." What things to bring together! Here is One who is possessor of divine fulness; no other could fill all in all, and yet the body is His fulness. He is not complete without it. In God's thought and purpose, Christ would be incomplete if His body had not its place too; how near and wonderful a place,—"His body," filled with His love, energized with His mind, working out His thoughts as our bodies work out the thoughts and purposes of our minds! It is in resurrection, of course, that He becomes this Head. It is a human Head, blessed be God, though He be much more than human. That is the fitting Head to this human Body. Thus, the Church could have no existence until after He had risen from the dead. Search throughout the Old Testament, you will find nowhere the first hint, even, of any company of people as the body of Christ. You will find saints put under Him for blessing, you will find His rule over man, but such a relationship is to be found nowhere, such a relationship could not, in fact, exist until Christ as Man had risen from the dead and become, therefore, the fitting Head for such a body. Then the body itself must be brought into being, and thus the descent of the Spirit follows the ascent of Christ to the throne of God.

2. The apostle carries us back now to what, alas, was our previous fellowship. We have been called to the fellowship of Christ, but how good for us to look back and see what He has called us out of. "And you," he says, "hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." This is the first time in the epistles that we find such a statement with regard to man's condition. The epistle to the Romans speaks of our being under death as the penalty upon our sins. It speaks of our being dead to sin as the effect of the new place of identification with Christ in His death, which God has given us; but now there is something more than this. It is man himself who is dead. That state, impracticable of help to any except God, is his. There is no possibility of self-help.

[p] ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who now [q] worketh in the sons of disobedience: among whom [r] we also all once had our manner of life in the [s] lusts of our flesh, practising the desires of the [t] flesh and of the [u] mind, and were by [v] nature children of [w] wrath, even as the [x] rest.

3 (4-10): Quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places.

3. But [y] God, being [z] rich in mercy, because of his [a] great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were [b] dead in trespasses, hath [c] quickened us [d] together with Christ (by [e] grace ye are saved) and hath [f] raised us up together and made us [g] sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the [h] ages to come he might

p *cf.* 1 Jno. 5. 19. *cf.* Jno. 12. 31. *cf.* Job. 1. 19.
q *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Jno. 8. 44. *cf.* Jno. 13. 2, 27.
r *cf.* Gal. 2. 15. *cf.* Jno. 8. 7.
s *cf.* Rom. 2. 21, 22. *cf.* Gal. 5. 16, 19-21.
t *cf.* Jas. 1. 21. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2.

14. *u cf.* Rom. 8. 6; *cf.* Col. 2. 8. *v cf.* Rom. 5. 12; *cf.* Gen. 5. 3 with Ps. 51. 5. *w* Rom. 1. 18; ch. 5. 6. *x cf.* Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. *y ctr.* ver. 1. *z* ch. 1. 7; ver. 7; *cf.* Ps. 51. 1; *cf.* Ps. 103. 8-11. *a* Jno. 3. 16; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 9, 10. *b* ver. 1; *cf.* Rom. 5. 6-8; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 6. *c* Col. 2. 13; *cf.* Jno. 11. 43, 44; *cf.* Jno. 5. 25, 26; *cf.* Jno. 3. 36. *d cf.* vers. 14-18; *cf.* Gal. 3. 28. *e* ver. 8; Acts 15. 11. *f cf.* Col. 3. 1; *cf.* ch. 1. 19, 20. *g cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Josh. 11. 23. *h cf.* ch. 1. 21; ch. 3. 21; *cf.* Rev. 20. 4; *cf.* Rev. 21. 1-4.

There is no possibility of working out of that condition. No work is conceivable in such a state. This death is Godward. There is not anything which for Him constitutes life at all. He says that this is not a condition of irresponsibility, however, but the reverse. It is "in trespasses and sins" that men are dead; active enough, fully active in this character in which the epistle to the Romans has spoken of them, but dead as to the hopelessness of it, as to the total absence of all response to God which it implies. Activity there is enough, "in which ye once walked," he says, "according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power," or authority, "of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the sons of disobedience." This is what gives its character then to the course of this world, age, as it is literally, as we have seen; the whole period characterized by that which is away from God, and with the ruler over it who, as the ruler of the power of the air, is exhibited to us as having that complete control of the earth which the heavens have for fruitfulness or for disturbance. This ruler is the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. They are marked out as the sons of disobedience, as that which gives him title to the power which he manifests over them. How complete is this apostasy, then, from the blessed place in which God created man to be at the beginning, the one with whom He had come down to walk as with a friend. Nor was there any who did not share this place. "Among whom we also," he adds, we Jews as well as you Gentiles, "all once had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh." We had our common fellowship, terrible fellowship indeed, "in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind;" that is, the grosser or the more refined and spirit part of our nature, both alike evil and away from God. Thus we were "children of wrath by nature even as the rest." The Jew is in no wise exempt, but, on the contrary, as being in this condition in spite of all the blessing and privilege which God had bestowed upon him, is only, if possible, in a greater depth of evil than the Gentile. Such is man's condition, then.

3. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins,"—that is where God's love lays hold upon us, not when there has been something right in us, not when we have begun to waken up and respond to the love which greets us from Him, but simply out of His love itself. "He has quickened us with Christ," and "by grace it is that we are saved," he adds in parenthesis, grace surely. He has given us life when in that condition. There is no condition possible between death and life, no life which could be true life except by His gift for those so fallen, so that here His love met us, doing the whole work from the beginning, quickening us, as he says, with Christ. He looks at it all as part of that same work which brought Christ up from the dead. As to the point of time, of course, we

show the [t]exceeding riches of his grace in [j]kindness towards us in Christ Jesus; for by [k]grace are ye saved through [l]faith, and this [m]not of yourselves, it is the [n]gift of God: not of [o]works, that no one might [p]glory. For we are his [q]workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [r]unto good works which God hath before [s]prepared that we should walk in them.

t ch. 1. 7. ver. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9.
j *cf.* Tit. 3. 4. *cf.* 2 Sam. 9. 1-3, etc.
k *cf.* Tit. 2. 11. *cf.* Rom. 3. 24.

l cf. Rom. 4. 16; *cf.* Gal. 3. 22. *m cf.* Jno. 1. 12, 13; *cf.* Jno. 6. 44. *n cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 5; *cf.* Acts 13. 48; *cf.* ch. 1. 4, 5. *o cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5; *cf.* Rom. 11. 6. *p* Rom. 3. 27; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–31; *cf.* Deut. 8. 17, 18. *q cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 6–9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18; *cf.* Gal. 6. 15; *cf.* Jno. 3. 6; *cf.* Col. 3. 10. *r cf.* Tit. 3. 12–14; *cf.* Jno. 15. 1–8; *cf.* Rom. 6. 1, 2, 6, 12–14. *s cf.* Gen. 2. 8–15; *cf.* Deut. 6. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 18; *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

are individually quickened and brought up, but as to the character of the quickening, it is this from its being part of that redemptive work which is the fruit of His intervention for us. It is a life which, in fact, is the life of Him with whom we are quickened. It is a life which makes Him to be the "First-born" among human brethren. Christ is looked at here, of course, as the Representative of His people, not, therefore, in the title which belongs to Himself personally, but in that which He had earned by the work to which He stooped. Thus it is all part of the same work. We are with Him in character by virtue of this quickening. Our condition is changed into the total opposite of what it was, and not only is our condition changed, our position is changed. He has "raised us up together." Quickening and resurrection are different things. Quickening is communication of life. Resurrection is the bringing of the life into the place of the living. Christ's resurrection has, in fact, given us this new place before God, as Romans has already taught us to say that we were justified by His resurrection. As His people, although justified now of course, when we become His people and not before, yet we look back to that resurrection of His which was the public sentence of God with regard to this. He has delivered us from every charge that could be made, from every question against us, by the resurrection of Christ. He has given us, therefore, a new and unassailable position in the One whom He has raised up. "He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." Notice the difference. He does not say "with Christ" now any more. He is thinking simply of the representative character of Him who is seated in the heavenly places for us. We are actually quickened, we are actually raised up, we belong no more to the dead, whether as to the condition of our souls or as to the company in which we are.* We are actually quickened and raised up, but we are not actually sitting down in the heavenlies. We are virtually and representatively sitting there in the One who is before God for us. Thus we reach, as has been said before, the height of Christian position. The epistle to the Romans has involved this already, for "in Christ" means the same thing there as here, but it is here put in the fullest and strongest way, it is developed in such a way as to make it practically a new thing for us. We would not be entitled to infer such things except we had divine warrant for them, but here we have the warrant. God has made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. Now comes the display of His glorious purpose as to this. It is "that He might show forth in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." We need not be surprised then that the place should be such a place of wonder! If God is going to show that which is indeed the fruit of Christ's work and the display of the full purposes of His heart, it will be surely true that the fullest blessing possible is necessitated for this. God is acting, as it were, though only grace could say so, on His own account;

* It will be noticed that "together" suggests the union of Jew and Gentile, as later on in ver. 16, they are spoken of as reconciled "in one body" by the cross. Thus we not only are quickened and raised individually, but by the very fact that *all* believers are so, we have a common life and position, into which the previous distinction of Jew and Gentile cannot enter.—S. R.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 11–iv. 16.)

The mystery of the Church as the house of God and body of Christ.

SECTION 1. (Chap. ii. 11–22.)

One new man and one habitation of God.

1 (11, 12): The original state.

1 WHEREFORE, remember that ye who once were [t]Gentiles in the flesh, who were called [u]uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the [v]flesh done by hand, that ye were at that time [w]without Christ, being [x]aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the [y]covenants of promise, having no [z]hope and [a]without God* in the world.

2 (13-18): The enmity put away.

2. But now, [b]in Christ Jesus, ye who once were afar off are made [c]nigh by the blood of Christ. For he

* The word is one, and might almost be rendered "atheists."

cf. Jer. 14. 8. *a cf.* 1 Thess. 4. 5; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 2. *b cf.* ver. 4; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 22. *c cf.* Heb. 10. 19; *ctr.* Ex. 20. 18 with Heb. 7. 18, 19; *cf.* Rom. 3. 25.

t ver. 1, ch. 1. 13.
u cf. 1 Sam. 31. 4. *cf.* Is. 52. 1.
v cf. Rom. 2. 26–28. *cf.* Tit. 1. 10.
w cf. Acts 4. 12. *ctr.* ver. 13. *cf.* ch. 5. 8.
x ch. 4. 18. *cf.* Gal. 2. 15. *cf.* Is. 61. 5. *cf.* Ex. 12. 43.
y Rom. 9. 4. *cf.* Lk. 1. 72, 73 with Gen. 17. 2–14. *cf.* Ex. 19. 5.
z cf. Acts 26. 6, 7. *cf.* Acts 28. 20.

but then with regard to us, it is grace and nothing but grace. He adds that all the way through here: "For ye are saved by grace, through faith"; and as if that were not enough, he adds, "and this not of yourselves:" that is, as surely is meant here, the faith itself is not of us. It is not of us, but it is God's gift. There is no principle of works, therefore, that any one may boast; nay, if you talk of works, we are His workmanship, and in such a way as He worked at the beginning in creation itself. We are His new creation, "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." Here is what brings us, of course, into that scene of which the epistle to the Galatians has spoken to us. It is God's work in us that has accomplished this, and "He has created us unto good works," such works "as He has afore prepared that we should walk in them." He has given us a nature which will be fruitful in us after the manner that He desires. He knows what He is doing and His purposes cannot fail of accomplishment. Thus, poorly (if we look at ourselves,) as we may rightly think of ourselves, the glory to come will display the full accomplishment of all that He has had in His heart to do; and the brethren of Christ will be such as even in this way He will not be ashamed to call His brethren.

DIV. 3.

Sec. 1.

1. Having had thus the individual Christian position which the Spirit of God makes good to the soul, we now come to that which is the fruit of the Spirit, uniting us together and to Christ above. The Church is seen here in the first place as the body of Christ, and then as the house of God. The relation of the bride does not as yet come before us. The apostle goes back now to comment upon what they were to whom he was writing, as "in time past Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision" by that which was, after all, only the "circumcision in the flesh made by hands," but still in the state of privilege, as the people of God on earth. The Gentile state was that of wanderers altogether, who had turned their backs upon God and who were left, as to the mass, in the state which they had chosen. They were "without Christ," "aliens" too "from the commonwealth of Israel," "strangers from the covenants of promise;" they had "no hope," that is no hope that was rightly founded, little in fact of any kind, and were "without God in the world;" an awful position, but which he only refers to here, in order to make the contrast now more wonderful.

2. Now in Christ Jesus, they who were "far off" were "made nigh," made nigh at infinite cost, by the blood of Christ; that which at once declares the enorm-

is our [d]peace who hath made [e]both * one and broken down the [f]middle wall of partition, having [g]abolished in his flesh the enmity, the [h]law of commandments in ordinances, that he might form in himself of the two * [e]one new man, making peace; and might [j]reconcile both * unto God in [k]one body through the [l]cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and [m]preached the gospel of peace to you † who were [n]afar off, and peace to those that were [o]nigh; for through him we [p]both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

* The first of these is neuter, the last two masculine. The difference seems to be that when the result is prominent, it is neuter; but when it is the moral effect upon man, the personal form is used. Thus reconciliation and access are both in the personal form. A similar use is seen in John i. 11. "He came to His own [things] and His own [people] received Him not.

† Literally, "evangelized peace."

d cf. Mi. 5.5. *cf.* Col. 1.20. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
e vers. 16, 18. *cf.* Jno. 10. 16.
f cf. Deut. 7. 2, 3. *cf.* Ex. 34. 12–16. *cf.* Acts 10. 13–15, 28.
g cf. Col. 2. 14, 20. *cf.* Heb. 8. 13.
h cf. Acts 15. 10, 11. *cf.* Rom. 4. 14–17.
i cf. Gal. 3. 28. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *cf.* ch. 4. 24.
j cf. Col. 1. 20; *cf.* Rom. 5. 10; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 18–21. *k* ch. 1. 23; ch. 4. 4; 1 Cor. 12. 13. *l cf.* Gal. 6. 14; *cf.* Gal. 2. 19, 20. *m cf.* Jno. 20. 19–23; *cf.* Mk. 16. 15; *cf.* Col. 1. 23. *n* Is. 57. 19; ver. 13. *o cf.* Rom. 10. 16 21. *p cf.* Col. 3. 11; *cf.* ch. 3. 12; *cf.* Heb. 10. 19; *cf.* Rom. 5. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.

ity of sin in the sight of God and at the same time the infinite love which could pay the price necessitated. That which has declared the sin of the world in its fullest character is that which has put it away for every one who believes. He Himself is "our peace," and this in a double character. First of all, as the apostle puts it here, He has made Jew and Gentile "one," having "broken down the middle wall of partition." In fact, what was Jew or Gentile, when both were dead in trespasses and sins? All distinctions of necessity vanish in death and when both alike need to have peace made for them, both alike are practically far off from God, whatever the outward nearness. In fact, the very law which the Jew prided himself upon, the law of commandments in ordinances, was itself the enmity, that is, a cause of distance between God and men. Not only it could not bring nigh, but as long as it was maintained, it actually held men at a distance from God. It was the accuser of the Jew who boasted in it. It was that which made exceeding sinful the sin which it exposed. Thus it was the enmity which Christ met and abolished in His cross. This has been all worked out for us in previous epistles, but it is now looked at as connecting with the Church as the body of Christ, for which Jew and Gentile had to come together and both had to be brought nigh to God. The enmity was not merely in its effect towards the Jew only, because the condition of the Jew was only the condition of man thoroughly exposed. The enmity, therefore, had to be slain (a strong word used as to it) by that cross which was its penalty, taken and thus removed from those for whom it was taken. Thus, Jew and Gentile in Christ are brought together in "one new man." He does not say "one *body*" simply, now, because Christ, the Head, is also seen here. Thus it is "one new man" and both are reconciled to God also "in one body by the cross." He could not say the "new man" was reconciled, just because that brings in Christ. It was, therefore, here simply "in one body." The full announcement of this must be given as the gospel is given. Christ, therefore, has come and preached peace. We have there contemplated His coming into the world, but now made effective by the work of the cross, so that He preaches peace; whoever may be the instrument used, yet He Himself clearly is the great Proclaimer of it. Coming nigh, as He has done to those afar off, the distance between them and God is ended and over. He found none who did not need peace. It had to be preached to "those afar off and those that were nigh," and now "through Him" "both have access," by the one Spirit given to both, to God as Father. Thus not only is the distance removed on God's side, but it is removed on our side also. God Himself having, by the work of the Spirit, thus put us into the position practically to which the cross had given title. Here then is

3 (19-22): The spiritual house.

3. So then, ye are no more [q]strangers and foreigners, but ye are [r]fellow-citizens with the saints and of the [s]household of God, being [t]built upon the foundation of the [u]apostles and [v]prophets, [w]Jesus Christ* himself being the corner stone; in whom [x]all the building fitted together [y]increaseth to a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a [z]habitation of God in the Spirit.

* Many read, "Christ Jesus."

q ver. 12. *cf.* Deut. 16. 11.
r *cf.* Phil. 3. 20. *cf.* Heb. 12. 22-24. *cf.* ch. 3. 6.
s *cf.* Gal. 6. 10. *cf.* 1 Tim. 3 15.
t *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 2. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 6; *cf.* Rev. 21. 14.
u *cf.* ch. 4. 11; *cf.* Acts 1. 13; *cf.* Acts 15. 2; *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 7-10.
v *cf.* Acts 13. 1; *cf.* Acts 15. 32.
w *cf.* Matt. 16. 18; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 10, 11; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 4-6.
x *cf.* ch. 3. 15; *cf.* ch. 4. 4, 16.
y *cf.* 1 Ki. 6. 7 with Acts 2. 47; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17.
z *cf.* Ex. 25. 8; *cf.* 1 Ki. 5 3-5; *cf.* Jno. 2. 19-21; *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 16.

the first declaration really of the body of Christ, as we see directly, the revelation of the mystery in other ages unknown to the sons of men, but now revealed. We have nothing yet, as in Corinthians, of the relation, properly speaking, or at least of the activity in the relation of those brought together in this manner. It is glanced at afterwards, but at present the great point is the relation of the Head to the body which, indeed, he has spoken of before, and with the implication of the blessedness attaching to it for His people. He who is Head to the Church is "Head over all things" and thus all things are made to minister to the people whom His work has brought nigh.

3. Thus we have had, in the first part of the epistle, the relationship to the Father as children. We have had, just now, the relationship to Christ as His body. This is, of course, to Christ as Man therefore; His humanity is needed for it, and now we have the relationship to the Spirit as the house of God, indwelt of Him. The body and the house are only, in this way, different aspects of the Church. The Spirit of God dwells in the body, a truth which has its corresponding presentation in the fact that it is in our bodies also that the Spirit dwells. We remember also that in the Lord personally, His body is spoken of as the temple of God. Thus, the body in this sense also becomes the temple of God, being, in fact, that in which the Spirit displays Himself, by which His mind is made known. That is the thought of the body. Here we have the thought rather of the glory to God resulting from it. The house indwelt of the Spirit becomes a "holy temple." The apostle refers, therefore, again to their condition as being once "strangers and foreigners." Now they are "fellow-citizens with the saints," not with Israel, of course, although they might be and are called so in the Old Testament; but yet those brought, in fact, near to God, the remnant of Israel, but now in another and nearer relationship, are those with whom the Gentile Ephesians are made fellow-citizens. That is on the human side. On the divine side, they are of the household of God. The thought of the temple is to be qualified by this, that it is a living temple now, not a house made with hands, but God dwelling and walking in His people. This only, of course, gives fuller truth to the temple character which the apostle goes on to; built solidly upon the "foundation of apostles and prophets" (those, as we see by the order here, and as we see more fully presently, of the New Testament alone) "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone," the One who in Himself unites, as it were, the two sides of the building,—the Jew and the Gentile,—together, while He is the foundation of the whole. The "apostles and prophets" are not the foundation, but they lay the foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In Christ, therefore, all the building is fitly framed together. No one thought can express what Christ is to His people. They are built upon Him, but they grow up in Him also and thus growing, they are to be for eternity a "holy temple in the Lord." The title given to Him here shows His authority over it. He is, in fact, the Leader of the praises of His people and the One who is, as we may say, their praise note also.

SECTION 2. (Chap. iii. 1-13.)
The ministry of the mystery.

FOR this cause, I Paul, the [a]prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed ye have [b]heard of the administration of the grace of God which was [c]given me toward you, that by [d]revelation the mystery was made known unto me, according as I have [e]written before briefly; whereby when ye read, ye can understand my intelligence in the [f]mystery of Christ, which in [g]other generations was not made known unto the sons of men as it hath [h]now been revealed unto his holy [i]apostles and prophets in the [j]Spirit, that the [k]Gentiles should

a ch. 4. 1. ch. 6.19, 20. *cf.* Acts 21. 33, etc. *cf.* Col 1.24.
b cf. Gal. 1. 23.
c ver. 7. *cf.* ch. 4. 7. *cf.* Rom.1.5.
d cf. Gal. 1. 12, 15, 16. *cf.* Rom.16. 25, 26.
e ch. 1. 9, 10, 18-22.
f cf. ch. 5.32. *cf.* Col. 2. 2. *cf.* Col. 4. 3.
g cf. Matt.13. 17, 35. *h cf.* ver. 10. *i cf.* ch. 2. 20; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 9; *cf.* 2 Pet. 3.2. *j cf.* Jno. 16.7,13-15. *k cf.* Acts 11.18.

But He would not have us consider the temple as being simply a future thing; that would leave us without the present blessing of it. He adds, therefore, that we are "builded together for an habitation of God" in Christ. The building is not complete, but it is an actual existence, none the less. It is a house in which God's praises are already begun, an "habitation of God," not such as Israel's of old, but "in the Spirit." These things are, as yet, simply delineated, as we may say, and outlined for us. We shall find the practical working elsewhere. The whole triune God is in relation to us, Father, Son and Spirit, and we have a different character and blessing in relation to each one, Christ Himself being, as we know, the ground of the whole.

Sec. 2.

We now come to the ministry of the mystery, with the distinct declaration of its being truth absolutely new, so that we are not to confound it with anything in the Old Testament, save, of course, what may be typically given there; but types need their explanation and therefore are no contradiction to the truth which they contain, being "hid in God" until the time comes for the revelation.

Paul declares here that he himself and no other is the one charged with the commission to declare these things. The grace to the nations connects evidently with this character of his teaching. His place, rejected of men for Christ's sake, being the seal of his ministry to the Gentiles; grace to the Gentiles was grace in its fullest aspect, and the administration of this grace was manifestly committed to him. The mystery was made known to him by revelation. He had written of it briefly before, (one would say, in the epistle to the Galatians,) although there is no development of the truth made known to him such as he is making known now, but the fact of what God had added to him beyond others is affirmed there and that is what he refers to here, by which, in reading it, they might understand his "intelligence in the mystery of Christ." He is speaking of the way in which he came into this knowledge, not of the contents of the knowledge itself. He was accredited even by the other apostles with that which was beyond them. He now goes on to speak of it as something entirely different from what had ever been revealed before. "In other generations it was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." He unites, after his manner, the names of others along with himself, and these, no doubt, were the dispensers under him of that which was to him, first of all, a personal revelation. This is what is to be understood everywhere in the epistles, as the meaning of those mysteries which characterize, in fact, Christianity in what is peculiar to it,—the mystery (not without a reference, no doubt, to the well-known heathen mysteries) was that which was revealed to disciples, which could not be understood apart from this revelation, and which, as revealed indeed, would only be apprehended by faith. It was not anything as yet made known to men at large, as by and by, of course, it will be. There are three things in these mysteries as spoken of here,—

be [l]joint heirs and a [m]joint body and [n]joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, whereof I was made [o]minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, according to the [p]working of his power. To me who am [q]less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the [r]Gentiles the gospel of the [s]unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the [t]administration of the mystery which throughout the ages hath been [u]hidden in God who [v]created all things; to the intent that [w]now

l cf. Gal. 3. 29 with Rom. 10. 12. *ctr.* Deut. 28. 13.
m cf. ch. 2. 16, 17. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13.
n cf. 2 Cor. 1. 20.
o cf. Col. 1. 23–25. *cf.* Rom. 15. 8–16.
p cf. Col. 1. 29; *cf.* Gal. 2. 8; *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9. *q cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 9; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 15. *r* Rom. 11. 13. *s cf.* vers. 18, 19; *cf.* Col. 2. 2, 3. *t cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12. *u cf.* ver. 5; Col. 1. 26. *v cf.* Heb. 3. 4; *cf.* Jno. 1. 3. *w ctr.* ver. 5; *cf.* Heb. 9. 26.

First of all, that the Gentiles should be joint heirs, heirs on equal terms with the Jews, or rather with Jewish believers. This we cannot find, therefore, anywhere in the Old Testament. There are blessings for the nations and the world to come, but the Jew is always the head, and the Gentile the tail; there is no joint heirship, no equality. The heirship itself also is different, therefore, from that which the Old Testament promises revealed. It is in another sphere altogether. The Christian blessings are in heavenly places, and the inheritance, as has been already shown us, is an inheritance with Christ. We are co-heirs in this way, also, in a higher and more wonderful position than the Old Testament ever spoke of for any saints whatever. That is the first point; named, no doubt, first, because it seems most in relation to Old Testament truth, though in fact different. Of heirship the Old Testament certainly spoke, but not in any sense of such a body as the Church is, a joint body, as we may call it, using the same word all through here, which shows us Jews and Gentiles upon the most entire equality,—a body in which Jews and Gentiles are alike members, the body of Christ, of which, of course, we have been already fully assured. There is absolutely nothing that could even give a possible ground of confusion with the Israelitish promises.

The third thing is that Gentiles and Jews are joint partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus by the gospel. Here again, a place in Christ is nowhere spoken of in the Old Testament. Christ is King and Lord of His people. They are never identified with Him as Christians now are said to be. The promise in the Old Testament, therefore, was not such a promise. He calls it promise here, not because we have not the place already, which we have been fully assured we have; but because this, as all else, waits for its full manifestation and perfect blessedness in the eternity to come. Of this gospel, having the joy of such things already to the soul, Paul had become minister "according to the gift of the grace of God given" him, "according to the working of His power." Power indeed was needed to sustain him in the height of such a place as this, to enable him to minister it in full reality, nothing accompanying it which would lessen the blessing in the eyes of men. He adds that this grace has been given to one "less than the least of all saints," a thing which those who know God will realize to be perfectly suited; the weaker the vessel, the more manifest is it that "the excellency of the power" is "of God" and "not of man." The strong language has nothing in it which for him is strained or exaggerated, clearly; but he always has in mind that out of which God drew him, and which for him had manifested itself in the clearest and most perfect grace that could be. The former opposer and persecutor of Christ's people carries with him ever the remembrance of this. But what a message of good news, of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of things infinite in their character, which, though known surely, yet altogether pass knowledge. The mystery was now, in this way, being dispensed by him,—a mystery hidden from the ages in God, who created all things, and who acts always in that character of power which this necessitates. Once the Creator, He is now the new Creator, a consummation to which all the

to the [x]principalities and authorities in the heavenly places might be made known, [y]through the church, the [z]manifold wisdom of God, according to the [a]purpose of the ages, which he purposed [b]in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have [c]boldness and access in confidence through the faith of him. Wherefore I beseech [you] that ye [d]faint not at my tribulations for you which are your [e]glory.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii. 14–21.)

Christ abiding in the heart by faith, we are filled into all the fulness of God.

FOR this cause I [f]bow my knees unto the [g]Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* of whom [h]every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the [i]riches of his glory, to be

x *cf.* ch. 1. 21. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 12.
y ver. 21. *cf.* ch. 1. 12. *cf.* Rev. 21. 9, etc.
z *cf.* Rom. 11. 33. *cf.* ch. 1. 8, 9.
a ch. 1. 4, 11.
b *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10.
c Heb. 10. 19. *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 18. *cf.* Rom. 5. 2. *ctr.* Ex. 20. 18.
d *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 1, 16. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12–14.
e *cf.* Phil. 1.

* Some omit, "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

29, 30; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 6; *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 2-4. *f cf.* ch. 1. 15, etc. *g cf.* ch. 1. 3; *cf.* Jno. 20. 17. *h cf.* ch. 1. 10, 21; *cf.* Col. 1. 15, 16; *cf.* Rev. 5. 11. *i cf.* Phil. 4. 19; *cf.* ch. 1. 7; *cf.* ch. 2. 4.

ages tended, and for which they were preparing the way. Not only to the Gentiles, in fact, was this revelation being made, but angels also, "principalities and powers in heavenly places" were become the witness of "the manifold wisdom of God" now being wrought out through the Church, the purpose of the ages in Christ Jesus. We are continually apt to forget that there are others than ourselves who are deeply concerned in all this revelation. The earth is not isolated from the rest of God's creation, but His purpose connects all together and is working for the fullest blessing of all. We miss, how much, when we think, therefore, simply of the insignificance of the earth, as if, almost, that which God did upon it must be proportionately insignificant also; but it is plain that a work has been done here which has been done nowhere else, and which can never be repeated; a work which has displayed God in such a manner that the endless ages of eternity and the widest extent of the universe will be alike filled with it. What things to minister! How suited to it and necessary for one taken up by God in this way, although he joins all Christians with himself, to be admitted to "boldness and access in confidence" to God, by faith in Christ. He beseeches the Ephesians, therefore, not to faint at his tribulations for them, which were, in fact, a cause of glory to them. They were all helping to make the more manifest the "excellency of the power" of all this to be "of God;" and He who was in them could not, therefore, be cast down for them.

Sec. 3.

This closes in a prayer which has been often compared with the prayer in the first chapter, a comparison which is much in the way of contrast also. He is in earnest for that for which he prays. The expression "I bow my knees" evidently intimates that. The whole body, as it were, witnesses to that earnest desire which is filling his soul and which he addresses now, not to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," not to God in that character, but to "the Father of our Lord." The prayer has to do, not as before, with the knowledge which he would have the saints have of the extent of their blessing. That has been gone through, and now he desires that they should be filled with the affections suited to those to whom God has drawn near after this manner; but still he contemplates what we have just seen, this purpose of God fulfilled in the saints as having to do with "every family in heaven and on earth." Of Him, he says, of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, every such family is named. It should not be "all the family" as in the common version, which destroys the very distinctions which the apostle means to emphasize here, distinctions which only make the unity of blessing which he has before him here, the more distinct and beau-

[j] strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man, that [k] Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being [l] rooted and grounded in love, may be fully able to [m] apprehend with all saints what is the [n] breadth and [o] length and [p] depth and [q] height, and to know the [r] love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that ye may be [s] filled into all the fulness of God. Now to him that is able to do exceeding

j cf. Col. 1. 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16. *cf.* Acts 1. 8.
k cf. Col. 1. 27. *cf.* Jno. 14. 23. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 5 with Rom. 8., 9 10.
l Col. 2. 7; *cf.* Jno. 15. 4-9. *m ctr.* Jno. 1. 5; *cf.* Phil. 3. 10-14. *n cf.* ch. 2. 17 with Rom. 10. 12, 13. *o cf.* ch. 1. 4 with ch. 2. 7; *cf.* Rom. 8. 29, 30. *p cf.* ch. 2. 6; *cf.* ch. 1. 20-22. *q cf.* ch. 4. 9; *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9. *r* ch. 5. 2, 25; Gal. 2. 20; Jno. 15. 13 with Rom. 5. 6-8; *cf.* Phil. 4. 7. *s cf.* Col. 2. 9, 10; *cf.* Jno. 1. 16; *cf.* 2 Ki. 4. 2-6. *t cf.* 2 Cor. 9. 8; *cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 1-8; *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 19; *cf.* Song 5. 1.

tiful. Angels and men, to speak of no more, are different families, at first sight, far enough apart. The angels "who excel in strength" are manifestly of a higher order naturally than man is, man who has been united to the dust of the earth, that pride may be hidden from him; yet when we realize what divine grace has done, this human family appears in a very different character. Christ has come into relationship with these in a way that He has not to the angels. "He layeth not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He layeth hold" (Heb. ii. 16). Thus men have a part in Christ that no angels can lay claim to. The work done for them, though their sins necessitated it, has been done for no other. It is a Man who is on the Father's throne, and not an angel. Divine grace, in the very fact of taking up the lowest of God's spiritual creatures, has manifested itself only the more, and this, too, necessitates the highest place of blessing for them. But are the angels passed over then in this? Have the other families of God been forgotten? It is clear that what the apostle has already said shows that this is not and could not be the case. The Arms that encompass man by the very fact of his being furthest off and lost, are wrapped around all the rest also. This Fatherly relationship which God has, of necessity, to His creatures, is now characterized by this relationship,—One who has come down amongst these creatures and who has in Himself wedded, as we may say, creation to God. Have the angels gained nothing by this? They did not say so when, Christ being born upon earth, they opened heaven to proclaim their praise. God's good pleasure was in men, but how much did that reveal of God to them also,—of the Father, who was also their Father?

The apostle prays now, therefore, that God may give them "according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man." His glory is being manifested indeed in all its fullness. He desires that this should be realized by us in the heart, but for what purpose? Not that signs and miracles may display what God is working, but "that Christ may dwell" in the heart through faith. This Christ, in whom all God's purposes united and with whom we have been brought into such wonderful and tender relationship, well may He dwell through faith in our hearts, not be a Visitor, known, as it were, fitfully and imperfectly, but dwelling there so that we might be "rooted and grounded in love," that the love which has been manifested in Him might be that out of which we should draw continually and in which also we should be established, a perfect love, dismissing all fear and refusing all distance. "Rooted and grounded,"—thus we are alone fitted to apprehend "with all saints," "the breadth and length and depth and height." He does not say of what. It is not of love, certainly, that he is speaking, for he immediately goes on to say that this is measureless, this surpasses knowledge. "Breadth and length and depth and height" naturally speak of God's ways, of what He is doing. The breadth of His work includes all His creatures. The length of it is from eternity to eternity. The depth of it could only be rightly known by that depth to which Christ has descended for us; and the height by that place which He has given us with Himself; but if we apprehend these things aright, they are, in fact measurements, in a sense, of that which cannot

abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the [u] power that worketh in us, to him be [v] glory in the church in Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the age of ages. Amen.

[u] *cf.* ch. 1. 13, 19 with Acts 1. 8.
[v] *cf.* ch. 1. 12 with ch. 2. 7. *cf.* Rev. 22. 5 with Rev. 1. 5, 6.

SECTION 4. (Chap. iv. 1–16.)
Practical results as to the Church.

1 (1–6): Unities.

1. I, therefore, the [w] prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk [x] worthy of the calling wherewith ye were [y] called, with all [z] lowliness and [a] meekness, with [b] long-suffering,

[w] ch. 3. 1. Col. 4. 18. [x] *cf.* ch. 1. 18. *cf.* Phil. 1. 27. *cf.* Col. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 12. [y] *cf.* Col. 3. 15; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14; *cf.* Gal. 1. 15. [z] *cf.* Rom. 12. 3; *cf.* Matt. 11. 29. [a] *cf.* Phil. 2. 3; *cf.* Col. 3. 12. [b] *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 2; *cf.* Matt. 18. 21, etc.

be measured, so that he immediately adds: "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," like those measurements which we take of the heavens from angles obtained on earth. They convey to us,—how much! but yet leave us to realize that we are incompetent in any full way to estimate what this love is; but even now the consequence of it will be, we shall be "filled up in all the fulness of God." This is what is in Christ. "In Him," as Colossians tells us, "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and it is added: "We are filled up in Him." This divine fulness then, though we cannot hold it, holds us. We are, as has often been said, like a vessel dipped in the ocean which cannot, of course, hold the ocean, but in which the ocean is, as well as round about it. Divine fulness, to be filled with that which is, nevertheless, infinite, how natural to think that here the apostle has in some way exhausted the sober estimate of things! It is as if anticipating that thought, that he says immediately, "To Him that is able to do far exceedingly above all that we ask or think, to Him be glory." How wonderful the connection there! Think of what he has just been speaking of. It is not, however, that he means that God is able to do more than fill us with all the fulness of God, but that as to all that we might think about it, He is able to exceed any measure we can make. We may ask, but He can transcend all that we can ask for. We may think, but He will be beyond us still, and beyond us in a power which works in us too, as the apostle says here, a power which is, of course, the power of the Holy Spirit. He has thus taken hold upon us for this very thing, and to make the Church the vessel of His praise, not simply for the present time, but in a way which nothing will exceed, forever: "To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the age of ages." How he seems to contemplate there the whole history as it were of the future, filled with wonderful and new displays continually, to new spectators also of God's goodness and power, and to all these and in the midst of all these, the vessel of His glory will still be the Church in Christ Jesus. Think of it, that this is what God has brought us into! Is it possible, one would ask, to add more to a revelation such as this?

Sec. 4.

We come now, according to the order of that which we find all through Scripture, to the practical results of all this. Truths such as we have been considering must surely be of the most practical character. All doctrine, in fact, is. The precept resulting must be, of necessity, lower than the doctrine itself. The cause is more than the effect and in this case cannot even be measured fully by the effect.

1. We have, first of all here, the unities which the apostle would have us mark. There are seven unities, the number which, as we well know, speaks of a perfection, which is peculiarly that of God. He reminds us, first of all, that as to himself, it is the prisoner in the Lord who is speaking. Well may he who has shown us the power of the truth upon himself in the very place which it has given him amongst men, exhort us to "walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called." The "calling" includes all the blessing that we have been looking at. It is this which God's voice is drawing us on with, a Voice

[c] forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to [d] keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of [e] peace. There is one [f] body and one [g] Spirit, even as also ye were called in one [h] hope of your calling; one [i] Lord, one [j] faith, one [k] baptism; one [l] God and Father of all, who is [m] over all and [n] through all and [o] in us* all.

c *cf.* Col. 3. 12, 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 3. 9 12.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 10.
e *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19.

* Some omit, "us."

cf. 1 Thess. 5. 13; *cf.* Col. 3. 14, 15. *f cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 13; *cf.* ch. 1. 22, 23; *cf.* ch. 2. 16; *cf.* Rom. 12. 4, 5. *g cf.* ch. 2. 18; *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 4. *h* ch. 1. 18; *cf.* Phil. 3. 14, 20, 21. *i cf.* 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6; *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 13. *j cf.* Gal. 1. 23 with 1 Cor. 15. 1–8; *cf.* Acts 24. 24. *k cf.* Acts 2. 41 with 1 Cor. 1. 13; *cf.* Gal. 3. 27, 28; *ctr.* 1 Cor. 12. 13. *l cf.* Num. 16. 22; *cf.* Is. 44. 6. *m cf.* Rom. 9. 5; *cf.* Is. 40. 12–17. *n cf* Ps. 139. 7–12; *cf.* Acts 17. 27, 28. *o cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 24; *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 12–15.

which has power in it also to accomplish its will; but what then is the suited answer to it on our part? "All lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love." The necessary effect of having to do with God is that it puts us into that low place before Him, the place of one with whom, therefore, the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity is able to dwell. To be with God, we must be in the sense of what God is, before Him in the consciousness of creature nothingness, yet not discouraged or distressed by that, but, on the contrary, realizing only the more the sweetness of the wonderful condescension of God toward us. We are in a world of suffering, where sin has caused suffering, and where even in one another the sin still remaining makes us suffer also; suffering from one another thus calling forth in us, as God would have it, only the more fully those Christian graces which find but opportunity for full display where there is such demand upon them. The lowliness which is the primal thought here, becomes in us meekness, and then, with reference to others, longsuffering and the bearing with one another, not as simply accepting, as it were, what we cannot escape from, but "in love." We have to "use diligence," therefore, to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." We have not to form this unity, as is clear. The Spirit dwelling in us all has formed it, but we have to keep it "in the bond of peace." Nor is it the unity of the body of which he is speaking. That is not ours even to keep, but the Spirit is that which animates the body and makes it work together for common blessing. Thus it is not a unity in form merely, as the unity of the body might be. It is the unity characterized by what the Spirit Himself is, and to keep it may involve also sometimes what might seem to be in contrast, rather, with the unity of the body. The members of the body cannot in that character be cut off from Christ, but yet looking at things as they are here, the figure for us may be rather that of the human body such as we know it in the place of sin and death, and where one member may have, even, to be cut off for the good of the whole. The unity of the Spirit is a holy unity. Separation from evil is an essential characteristic of it, and here it may carry us beyond what the mere thought of one body would seem to necessitate. The unity of the Spirit is living unity, and we need to use diligence to keep it. How many things there are in fact that are contrary to it in a world like this!

The specification of these unities follows. "One body and one Spirit" are linked together with the "one hope of our calling" in which we have been called. Here we have, as has been often said, the innermost of three circles that we find here. The "one body and one Spirit" give us, one may say, the deepest character of unity, to which the "hope of our calling" of necessity contributes. The energy which carries us forward is the energy which works for edification and blessing now. We have then the circle of profession, not meaning by that at all to imply mere profession, while yet it leaves room for it. Here we have "one Lord," Christ in the authority which belongs to Him; "one faith," that is to say, one creed, the common range of truth which belongs to us all; "one baptism," which is not, as we see at once, the baptism of the Spirit, for that would link with the first circle rather than with the second one. Moreover,

2 (7–16): Captivity led captive and the ministry for the increase of the body.

2. But unto [p]each one of us hath grace been given, according to the [q]measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he [r]saith: When he ascended on high he led [s]captivity captive and gave [t]gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also [u]descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up [v]far above all heavens, that he might [w]fill all things. And he gave some [to be] [z]apostles, and some [y]prophets, and some [z]evangelists, and some [a]pastors and [b]teachers; for the [c]perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we may no longer be babes, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, by craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through every joint of the supply, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

p *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 7. *cf.* ver. 16. q *cf.* Rom. 12. 3-6. *cf.* Col. 4. 17. r Ps. 68. 18. s *cf.* Jud. 5. 12. *cf.* Lk. 11. 21, 22. *cf.* Col. 2. 15. t *cf.* Acts 2. 33. *cf.* Heb. 2. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 4, etc. u *cf.* Matt. 12. 40; *cf.* Ps. 40. 2 with Gen. 37. 24. v Mk. 16. 19; ch. 1. 21; *cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Heb. 4. 14. w ch. 1. 23; *cf.* Col. 2. 9. x *cf.* Acts 1. 8, 13, etc; *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 28-30. y *cf.* Acts 11. 27, etc; ch. 2. 20. z *cf.* Acts 8. 5, etc. with Acts 21. 8; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 5. a *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17; *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 1-4; *cf.* Acts 20. 28; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13; *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 3, etc. b *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 7; *cf.* Acts 13. 1; *ctr.* Heb. 5. 12. c *cf.* Phil. 1. 14; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 2; *cf.* ver. 16.

baptism spoken of in this way, simply by itself, always seems to mean what we ordinarily call that: the baptism of the Spirit has to be expressed by this addition. The language here is used, in fact, analogically, the baptism of water being analogous with that which is a deeper thing; but in the apostle's words here it is simply the baptism of water, which connects, as we have seen, throughout with the kingdom, and therefore with the Lord. It is that in which the Lord is owned. It is that which brings into the sphere of discipleship and thus is linked with the "one faith," which is the disciples' creed. All is perfectly fitted together, therefore, here.

We have finally one unity which is wider, "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in us all." If we take what we have been learning of late, we might say that this "one God and Father" introduces us into a circle which includes the angels themselves also, and so we have the "over all" and "through all," and then in distinction, if this indeed be the reading (which is somewhat in question) "in us all;" it may be however, "in all." Here we have the wide extent of creation plainly before us. He is God of all this. He is the Father of all His creatures, and though sin has indeed come in and marred, for the time, the blessedness of it, yet grace, as we know, has come in too, and more than given us back all the reality of what we have here. Evil, therefore, is not thought of in this connection. It is the glorious presence of One whom everything serves, who pervades everything, whom, therefore, we can find everywhere, if this be the truth of the third clause. Here again, then, we find the blessed triune God: Father, Son and Spirit, all in connection with us, and ourselves in distinct blessing in relation to each Person.

2. Here, then, are the relationships, but we have now to see Christ Himself working for the maintenance and manifestation of what belongs to these relationships. There is grace given to every one of us, "according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" that is, all is in His hand as Lord of all, to measure out to every one what is appointed to him, what gives him his special place. The apostle refers us back to the sixty-eighth psalm, to show us Christ ascended on high, having "led captivity captive," that is, having led captive all the power of Satan, "captivity" put for the one who produces it. It is not enough for Him to deliver His redeemed, however. He must enrich them also. If He has ascended up on high, it is to give gifts to men; but the apostle reminds us here that the One who ascended is seen by this to be One who has descended. We could not rightly speak of ascension with regard to Him, if He had not done so. He was at the highest point of all. If He is now gone up, it is because, in grace, He left the place which was truly His. He has descended, in fact, into the lower parts of the earth. But here then, is a wonderful cause of blessing for us. The very One who descended is the One who has now gone up. Thus He fills all things. There is not a place between the depth of the cross and the height of the glory which He has not occupied. There is not a place in which

fecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the [d]edifying of the body of Christ; until we all [e]attain unto the [f]unity of the faith and of the [g]knowledge of the Son of God, unto the [h]full grown man, unto the [i]measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: in

[d] ver. 16. [e] ver. 15. [f] ver. 5. [g] 2 Pet. 3. 18. [h] ch. 2. 15. [i] ch. 1. 23.

we can be in which we cannot find Him for us; and, with the perfect knowledge which he has of all, the perfect knowledge, therefore, of our necessities, He has given gifts. He means to have us up with Himself where He is, and He knows how low He has to reach down after us. It is in this way, then, that He has given "some apostles, and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers."

Apostles and prophets come first, as we have already seen, and lay the foundation. Evangelists go out to bring in others and thus enlarge the building. Pastors and teachers care for that which is within, "for the perfecting of the saints." It is evident that not every gift is named here. It may be that every gift which He gives could scarcely be named; but that we have the special classes after this manner: evangelists, those preceding the pastors and teachers, as their work necessitates; while apostles and prophets stand, in some sense, apart from one another, in a way that is easily recognized; apostles representing more the authority of God, while the prophets speak of communications from Him. The pastors and teachers again are more closely united than any of the rest, a connection which is very obvious, for the pastor has to do with what in Corinthians is called "the word of wisdom," as the teacher has to do with the "word of knowledge." Yet these things tend to unite together; for the "word of wisdom" is but the power to apply to existing things the "word of knowledge;" and love which has the Lord's people at heart will tend always to develop the "word of knowledge" in this way. It is evident that the pastor has more the people before him, while the teacher occupies himself more with the truth; but the end is still, and in all these cases, "the perfecting of the saints." That is the first thing, and it is strongly individual. It is not yet said "for the edifying of the body of Christ," although we come to that directly, but the "perfecting of the saints,"—the individuals come first. God would not have us lose the individual in the general mass. He would not have us think of the body, as it were, apart from the members. Thus the individual saint is the first thing that is contemplated here. But then, let us notice, this "perfecting of the saints" is "to the work of the ministry." We are not to look at these things as if they were simply put side by side with one another, as if the "perfecting of the saints" was the same thing as "the work of the ministry." That is not the idea. The "perfecting of the saints," if the saints are members of the body of Christ, would be clearly to put every member in his place, and that place must be a place of ministry, for that is the function of each member of the body clearly. We have it directly after, here; but the very thought of a member of the body gives us a relationship of responsibility to the body at large, a relationship which each member has, in a way, peculiar to himself. From the very fact of what divine grace has fitted him for, he has a duty with regard to the whole to minister in that way to the whole. Thus the saints are not perfected, except as the result is the work of the ministry on *their* part, and this is parallel to the edifying of the body of Christ. That is what it involves. The body of Christ is built up by the action of these members, which, while they retain their individuality, (or there would be no peculiar ministry of any, as is clear, and no part edifying the whole), yet work for the common blessing. The whole is built up by that, as he says directly "which every part supplies."

This is the work which is needed to be done in the meantime, "until," as he says, "we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus he has carried us back to that thought of the

order that we may no longer be *j*babes, tossed and carried about with every *k*wind of doctrine, by the *l*sleight of men in craftiness, unto a *m*system of error; but holding the *n*truth in love, that we may *o*grow up unto him in all things who is the *p*head, [even] Christ: from whom the whole body *q*fitted together and knit by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of *r*each several part, worketh for itself the *s*increase of the body unto the building up of itself in *t*love.

j 1 Cor. 3. 1. Heb. 5. 13.
k Col. 2. 22.
l Acts 20. 30.
m ctr. 2 Tim. 1. 13.
n cf. 2 Jno. 1.
o ver. 13.
p ch. 1. 22.
q cf. ch. 2. 21.
r ver. 12.
s Col. 2. 19.
t cf. ch. 1. 4.

"one new man" which he has given us before this,—Christ and His body together. It is manifest that the body needs indeed, how much! to grow up, if it is to grow to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That "fulness of Christ" is here the Church itself, of course; for that, we have learned, is the "fulness of Him that filleth all in all," but it is the Church as a body fitted to the Head and therefore having arrived at its completion. Till then, the gifts are necessary here, and till then the "perfecting of the saints" must go on. And notice, the "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," these two consist almost of the same thing. We are built up from the Head and by that which is imparted to us by the Head. We are built up by that which we find in Christ. The Head develops the body, however little that may be in accordance with the figure, but Christians grow up in Christ, that is clear; and we see of how much importance the faith is of which he speaks. What knowledge of the Son of God could we have apart from the faith? The truth which God has communicated to us lies at the very foundation of everything, therefore, for our souls; only it must be truth that the Spirit of God ministers to us, and which, therefore, we learn not in the mere common way in which we may learn any other knowledge, but as subject to and taught of Him.

The effect will be that we shall be no longer babes; we shall not be "tossed and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Plenty of all that there is, and will be, and God would use it to exercise His people in the truth, that they may learn the value of that which they have, not that they may be carried away from it; and yet how apt apparently are we to be carried away! How we need to be warned with regard to this! How many systems of deception are there in the world, compared with that one truth which certainly must be somewhere, and which is the only thing that can be truth, for there is but one truth. If the babes are characterized by such instability, alas, how many remain babes, one would think, almost to the last! How common a thing it is to see those whom we thought well grounded in truth which they have enjoyed, delighted in, and yet who are carried off by the very first blast of error! How solemn a reminder it is of the need that we have to make progress in the truth that we have, if we are to hold it fast! We may learn it as a creed without ever having learned it really. We may rejoice in it in many respects and yet, for all that, without getting it so for our souls that it becomes a vital necessity for us. To lose it, is as it were to lose life itself; nay, it is to lose what is dearer than life; it is, at least in that measure, to lose Christ Himself. On the contrary, he says here "holding the truth in love," we are to "grow up to Him in all things who is the Head." How much, as already said, how much advance, then, have we all to make, how much have we to learn, how eager ought we to be over our lesson-book, how the gaps that are in God's word now for us ought to fill up! If all of it be just what God would have us acquainted with, if He has not given us too much, if the whole of it is necessary to form in us fully and properly the mind of Christ, what shall we do if we neglect the continually seeking to lay hold more of that which is indeed infinite

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iv. 17–v. 21.)

Ways that suit this.

1 (iv. 17-24): The truth in Jesus and the new man created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

1. THIS I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as [the rest of] the [u]Gentiles walk, in the [v]vanity of their mind, being [w]darkened in understanding, [x]alienated from the life of God because of the [y]ignorance that is in them, by reason of the [z]hardness of their heart; who, having cast off all [a]feeling, have given themselves up to [b]lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with [c]greediness. But ye have not so

[u] ch. 2. 2.
[v] Rom.1.21.
[w] Acts 26. 18.
[x] ch. 2. 1.
[y] 1 Pet.1.14.
[z] Rom.1.21.
[a] Rom.1.24.
[b] Gal. 5. 19.
[c] *ctr.* 1 Cor. 12. 31.

in its character, but which God would have us in some sense embrace as a whole? If we are to be developed as a whole, developed harmoniously, we must go on to this. It is from Christ, then, that the whole body is to be built up,—every part helping in this, every part ministering to every other part, (how we suffer, therefore, from the dislocation of saints from one another which we find to-day) and each part needing to be developed according to its measure also. How much we need then to care for one another and to think of one another, even to think rightly concerning ourselves! If the whole body is to be built up, we need all, clearly, to work for this, and in the measure of every part the body builds itself up. Let us notice that. Gifts of every kind have their place, but then there are no giftless parts. The body as a whole builds itself up. The gifts exclude no action of any part of the body, but, on the contrary, are meant to induce the fullest activity on the part of every member. All that we have, we have to serve with; all that we have is responsibility as well as privilege. And let us notice that this building up can only be in love. That is the spirit of it all. That is the only possible spirit which will beget true ministry, and love always will. How is it possible, if we love others, to see them in the need in which they are and not seek to minister to that need? And how little shall we allow any thought of our insufficiency to prevent us realizing the sufficiency of Him who is fitting us all together to accomplish in us the true character of one who ministers, which is only His character who is the Minister to us all! How can we be in any right fellowship with Him without being ministers after the pattern of His gracious ministry?

Div. 4.

The fourth division brings us, as always, to the ways that suit what has been already before us. We find, however, simply what is individual here. The Church as such, the relationship of the members to one another, and what would result from that relationship does not come before us.

1. In the first place, we have the truth "as it is in Jesus" and "the new man created in righteousness and holiness of truth." The apostle appeals to them, that now, God having separated them from all that they were in nature away from Himself, they must now walk not as other Gentiles walk but according to the truth in Jesus. He draws a strong picture of that old Gentile walk. It was "in the vanity of their minds," he says, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them because of the blindness of their heart." How solemn a picture of the darkness of the natural condition, and ignorance which is moral; by which, therefore, everything is distorted. On the other hand, as he will presently say to us, the holiness which belongs to us is holiness of truth.

We are delivered from the shadows, brought into the reality of things. So that holiness is never less than treating things, in fact, as they are. Faith is not an enthusiastic view of life or of anything. It is simply the true view gained by God being before the soul, the light having arisen upon

[d]learned Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him according as the [e]truth is in Jesus; that ye have [f]put away as concerning your former manner of life the old man, which corrupteth itself according to the [g]deceitful lusts; and that ye are being * [h]renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye have [i]put on the new man which after God is [j]created in righteousness and [k]holiness of truth.

d Acts 2. 36.
e Rev. 3. 14. 1 Jno. 5.20.
f Rom. 6. 6. Col. 3. 9.
g 1 Tim.6.9.
h 2 Cor.4.16. Col. 3. 10.
i Col. 3. 10.
j ch. 2. 10. *c*/. Col.3.10.
k ch. 5. 9.

* Or, "are."

it. Christ was now the Object before them. They had heard Him and "been instructed in Him, as the truth is in Jesus." He does not say, as the truth is *in Christ*. The truth "in Jesus" is the practical walk, such as His walk was. He says "Jesus," therefore, because he is thinking, not of a place that we have in Him or of the results of His work for us, but simply His example, and Jesus is the name belonging to Him as here in the world, but it was the Christ that they had learned. It is as we see Him in the world that we realize what He is. Christ, as such, is an Object of faith, as we may say, while as Jesus He has come into the sphere of practical life, lived before our eyes. We see the truth in Him. "As long as I am in the world," He says, "I am the Light of the world." Consequently, everything takes its true shape in connection with Him; but it is thus, in fact, that we know Christ, —Christ is His official title. It is that which speaks of Him as the Doer of the blessed work which He has accomplished for us. It is thus that we must learn Him first, before we are competent to realize in any measure His life in the world. Having learned the value of His work for us, we must then remember that we are to walk as He walked. We must look back to that walk of His. It is in putting these things together that our practical ways become what God would have them.

After the quails, the Manna. The quails, the life given up, must be the first, for us. We must know Him as the Victim and the Saviour, and this is what introduces us to Him as the Manna, the Bread from heaven. It is thus alone we are able to walk in His company, and all that we have learned of His work is to make us more completely His in our ways down here. As a consequence, the truth for us is that we "have put off according to the former conversation, the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts." We have renounced this. It is always said, if we speak of the "old man," that we have put it off, and of the "new man," therefore, that we have put it on. The one has come in the place of the other. The two are not existent side by side. The man that we were, the man away from God, the man walking after the imaginations of his own heart, that is the man that we have renounced. He has come to an end for us at the cross, whose judgment we have seen there. Our own wills and ways are judged. We have been renewed in the spirit of our mind; we have "put on the new man," the man of the new creation, created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth. It is the man, therefore, who belongs to another scene than any this world can furnish. It is a scene in which Christ is the centre and indeed, in one sense, everything. The epistle to the Colossians gives us this character of the new man; that is, that he is one for whom there is "neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Plainly those are the differences which obtain upon earth, in a fallen world. The new man has lost sight of these. He is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," where Christ is all and in all. Here in Ephesians, we have, rather, the effect of this. The character manifested is "righteousness and holiness of truth," but "holiness" is not here the word which stands for separation from evil. It is that, rather, which speaks of piety towards God, which puts Him in His place, the place which is necessarily His,

2 (Iv. 25-v 2): The imitation of God in Christ, walking in love.

2. Wherefore, putting away [l]falsehood, speak ye truth every one with his neighbor, because we are [m]members one of another. Be ye [n]angry and sin not; let not the [o]sun go down upon your wrath,* neither give [p]place to the devil. Let him that [q]stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, [r]working with his hands that which is good, that he may [s]have to distribute to him that hath need. Let no [t]corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for [u]edifying, according to need, that it may give [v]grace to them that hear. And [w]grieve not the Holy Spirit of God with which ye were [x]sealed for the day of redemption. Let all [y]bitterness, and [z]heat of passion, and [a]wrath, and [b]clamor, and [c]injurious language be put away from you, with all [d]malice; and be ye [e]kind one to another, [f]tender hearted, [g]forgiving one another, even also as [h]God in Christ hath forgiven you. Be ye, therefore, [i]imitators of God as beloved children, and [j]walk in love, even as Christ also [k]loved us and delivered himself up for us, an [l]offering and a sacrifice to God for a [m]sweet smelling savor.

* Or, "provocation."

l Col. 3. 9. m Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor.12.26. n Mk. 3. 5. o Ps. 37. 8. p 2 Cor.2.10, 11. q Rom.13.9. r Acts 20. 35. s Lk. 3. 11. t Col. 3. 8. u Rom.15.2. v Col. 4. 6. w *cf.*1 Thes. 5. 19. Heb. 10.29. x ch. 1. 14. y Jas. 3. 14. z Gal. 5. 20. a Jas. 1. 20. b Matt. 12. 19. c Jude 9. d Col. 3. 8. e Lk. 6. 33. f 1 Pet. 3. 8. g Col. 3. 13. h *cf.*2 Cor.5. 19. i *cf.*1Cor.11. 1. j Rom. 14. 15. k Jno.15.12. l Heb. 10. 5. m Lev. 1. 9, 13, 17; Lev. 2. 2.

which He can never be absent from, except as the darkness of mind resulting from the condition of the soul may be unable to see Him.

2. Thus, all falsehood is put off. We "speak truth every one with his neighbor." Here indeed is a glance at a motive which comes from our relationship to one another in the Church. We are "members one of another." The eye must not deal falsely with the foot or hand; but for the members to defraud one another is to deal untruly with themselves. If we are angry, we must take care that sin does not come in upon the heels of it. There is an anger which we read of in the Lord's case. "He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." If we nurse even such anger it will be sure to degenerate. We are, therefore, not to let the sun set upon our wrath, nor to give room, in this way, to the devil. In a world in which sin is, we can have no heart for God if we do not feel it, nay, if we are not aroused by it; but if the personal element is allowed, there will soon be a wrath which is not of God. Now for him that stole, he is to steal no more, but that negative character is not enough for him. "Rather let him toil, working with his hands that which is honest, that he may have to distribute to him that needeth." No corrupt word is to be allowed out of the mouth, but again "that which is good" in the way of positive ministry, "that it may give grace to those that hear it." Then we are not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom we have been sealed to the day of redemption." Notice how there is brought in here the motive derived from the grace which has come in to deliver and bring us through the peril of the way. The sealing, as we have seen elsewhere, implies our security. We are not threatened with the Holy Spirit leaving us if we grieve Him. He has come to abide, but on that very account, we must not grieve the gracious Visitor. How the word speaks of His personal interest in us, the One who has come to make good Christ's interest in His own. This bears, of course, upon every other matter here. Again, "bitterness, heat of passion, wrath, clamor, injurious language" have all to be removed from us, "with all malice," and the opposite character is to be maintained: "Kindness, compassion, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ," as it should read, "hath forgiven us." It is not "God for Christ's sake," which would seem to

3 (v. 3-21): Light in the Lord; Christ giving light.

3. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be even [n]named among you as becometh saints, nor filthiness, nor [o]foolish talking, nor [p]jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of [q]thanks. But this ye well know that no [r]fornicator nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an [s]idolater, hath any [t]inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one [u]deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the [v]wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye, therefore, [w]partakers with them: for ye were [x]once darkness, but now are [y]light in the Lord; [z]walk as children of light (for the [a]fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), [b]proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no [c]fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even [d]reprove them; for the

n *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 1.
2 Tim. 2. 19.
o 2 Tim. 2. 23. Tit. 3. 9.
p Rom. 1. 28.
q 1 Thess. 5. 18.
r 1 Cor. 6. 9.
s 1 Cor. 5. 11.
t 1 Cor. 6. 9 Gal. 5. 21.
u Gal. 6. 7.
v Rom. 2. 8 Col. 3. 6.
w 1 Tim. 5. 22.
x 1 Pet. 2. 9.
y 1 Thess. 5. 5.
z 2 Cor. 6. 14.
a 1 Jno. 2. 9.
b Rom. 12. 2.
c 2 Cor. 6. 14.
d 1 Tim. 5. 20.

intimate as if God acted in it simply for Another, whereas "God in Christ" speaks of *the way* in which He forgives, what He has done, in fact, for us, that He might be able to forgive us, and this brings out His whole heart as well as what righteousness has necessitated. We are thus to be "imitators of God as dear children," those who express and commend their Father's character, and we are to walk in love, after the pattern of that love which Christ had to us when He gave Himself up for us "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." It is the burnt offering, of which the apostle is reminding us here, that offering which speaks of the perfect obedience of One who came here to do the will of God, nothing else. The offering was to God for men, and in the remembrance of this we are to walk in love, which we have learnt in Him.

3. The character and effect of the light into which we are brought is now urged upon us. There are things which are not even to be named by those who would act in character according to their name. Saints are thus set apart to God, and those who are His must be separate from the breath of defilement; nay, there are things which are less gross than these which are still not convenient, not fitting to the character of those who should walk seriously as before God, for life is serious, and as those, also, who realize the goodness of God and walk, therefore, in the spirit of praise which becomes those who recognize this. He warns us distinctly here, that no one characterized by such things as he names has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Men might deceive them with vain words, they might prate of Christian liberty and what not, but "on account of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience." He is speaking, of course, of the world, and not of Christians. He does not threaten Christians with the wrath of God. It is not the way in which the Spirit of God works upon us. At the same time, that this wrath does come upon the children of disobedience, necessarily gives intense solemnity to it. Christians, therefore, must not be in any sense partakers with them. There must be the fullest possible separation. Men could do in the darkness what they cannot do in the light, and therefore the sins of Christians have, in fact, a worse character than those even of the men around them. We were once darkness, we are now "light in the Lord." The title again brings in the thought of His authority over us. We have learned to recognize this and to walk as children of the light, because "the fruit of the light" (so it should read) "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." How blessed and cheering the light is! And such is the path which God has ordained for us and which the light increases to the perfect day. We prove herein by practical ways what is acceptable to the Lord. We are not to have "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but to reprove them. The very moderation here of his words is

things which are done by them in secret it is a [e]shame even to speak of. But all things, when they are [f]exposed by the light are made manifest; for that which [g]maketh everything* manifest is light. Wherefore he saith: [h]Awake thou that sleepest and [i]arise from among the dead, and Christ shall [j]shine upon thee. Look, therefore, [k]carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as [l]wise, [m]redeeming the opportunity, because the [n]days are evil. Wherefore be ye not [o]foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not [p]drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be [q]filled with the Spirit, [r]speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving [s]thanks at all times for all things to him who is [t]God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; [u]submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of [v]Christ.

* Some render, "Everything that is made manifest is light."

[e] Rom. 1.28.
[f] Jno. 3. 20.
[g] 2 Cor.5.10, 11.
[h] Is. 60.1, 2. (Paraphrased.)
[i] Rom.13.11.
[j] 1 Jno. 2. 8.
[k] Col. 4. 5.
[l] Rom. 16. 19.
[m] Col. 4. 5.
[n] Jno. 7. 7.
[o] Col. 1. 9.
[p] 1 Cor. 11. 21.
[q] Lk. 1. 15, 41, 67. Acts 2. 4. Acts 4. 31. Acts 9. 17.
[r] Col. 3. 16.
[s] 1 Thess. 5. 18.
[t] Col. 3. 17.
[u] 1 Pet. 5. 5.
[v] 2 Pet. 2. 10.

striking. He does not say works fruitful in evil. It should be enough to say "unfruitful" for us. "What fruit had ye then," asks the apostle, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" What we want is not merely a correct walk, but what God Himself shall find fruit in. Our character, therefore, as manifested in our ways, is to reprove these unfruitful works beneath which is also a secret depth of evil which it would be a shame even to speak of; but the light makes everything manifest. The Christian, alas, may sleep in the light itself, wherefore he says: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead and Christ shall give thee light." To sleep among the dead, how terrible a thing! But the Christian abides, as we see here, always in the light. He may forget it, he may be untrue to it, but the light is there, and the light for him is in the face of Christ. There is no other test for anything but how it looks in His presence. We are to walk carefully, therefore. We are in a world which requires this. We must have the wisdom which is the application of the truth to all the circumstances of the way, and we must redeem the opportunity, the season; for the power of evil is such that unless we are careful, ready to lay hold of every opportunity for God, we shall find ourselves soon unable to make head against the power of Satan which is in the world around to-day. We are not to be foolish, therefore, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Then comes a beautiful word. We are not to be "drunk with wine," not carried away from our sober senses, "in which is excess," but to "be filled with the Spirit." Here there is no excess. Yet, when the Spirit came at Pentecost, men said, in their perplexity, "These are filled with new wine;" and indeed the power of the Spirit carries us so outside of the things which are natural to men and in which the heart is, that those whom the Spirit actuates will be counted to have lost their sober senses; but the power of it is manifest in the way in which the truth enjoyed makes music in the heart,—as he says here: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Notice that he puts it upon us to be thus filled. He does not even bid us pray for it. He will not allow us to think, as it were, that our dullness can be anything except the result of the way in which we straiten and limit the Spirit that God has given us. The spring will necessarily spring up and overflow. It would have to be kept down, as it were by force, if it did not do this, and it is the power of other things entering in which hinders thus the blessed Spirit in giving us that which is the proper effect of the blessed truth He ministers. With this, how naturally and necessarily goes the spirit of thankfulness! "Giving thanks at all times," he says,

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. v. 22–vi. 9.)

Natural responsibilities.

1 (v. 22-33): The fundamental unity for man as such.

1. [w]WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as to the Lord; for the husband is [x]head of the wife, as Christ also is [y]head of the church; he is the [z]saviour of the body. But as the church is [a]subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything. [b]Husbands love your wives even as Christ also [c]loved the church and delivered himself up for it, that he might [d]sanctify it, cleansing it by the

[w] Col. 3. 18.
[x] 1 Cor. 11. 3.
[y] Col. 1. 18.
[z] ver. 25.
[a] Col. 3. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 5.
[b] Col. 3. 19.
[c] ver. 2.
[d] Jno. 17. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 2.

"for all things to Him who is God and Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." *He* could give thanks at all times. He goes out with a hymn to His agony in the garden. For us, how simple, where there is nothing of this sort really awaiting us, no darkness such as He was in, nothing but the blessed light itself, how easy it should be for us to give thanks! "Submitting yourselves one to another," he says finally, "in the fear of Christ;" an unusual expression, as one might expect the *fear of the Lord*, or *the fear of God*, but the "fear of Christ" may have its suited place here, for there is a fear which springs out of the very consciousness of the love which His Name expresses.

Div. 5.

We have now the earthly relationships of the heavenly people. It is striking that such responsibilities as these should come in just in this place. We find them also in Colossians, where the body of Christ is before us in some sense as we have it here, but it is suited, surely, that in the place which God has given us in Christ before Him, a place in which there is neither male nor female, in which, therefore, all these relationships might seem not to be found, that we should, nevertheless, have them pressed upon us. We belong to the new creation. We could not say that the relationships of which he is speaking here belong to this, and yet what is taught us clearly is that, while we are here, we are to own all that is of God, as we have seen with regard to other things. Creation was of Him. The world is fallen, but that which He meant for man in these relationships is none the less good in itself, and in this way to be respected. Christianity, as we know, in no wise sets aside whatever is of Him in any sphere, and it is suited that just here, therefore, where at least we might imagine such things could never come in, we have explicitly the responsibilities attaching to earthly relationships. In these, moreover, there is shining through, the light of those higher ones in which God Himself has taken up the ties of nature to make them the patterns of things which His own love has brought in for us. Thus it is here that we have the Church's relationship to Christ as the Eve of the "Last Adam," and it is striking that here we go to the very beginning of the world, before, in an evil sense, there was any world at all, before sin had spoiled things, to find at the very outset imaged for us that special relationship which Christ has made His own. How near it must be to His heart when it is the first thing that we find typically presented to us in the history of man! Thus, the Lord means to have us for Himself, and the tie of nature, we may be well assured, is, after all, only a feeble figure of the reality of which it is the figure.

1. The apostle begins with this here, with wives and husbands. The wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands as to the Lord. The authority of the Lord is concerned in it, and the way in which He has taken these things up is to be reverently observed also. The husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the Head of the assembly. The very shadows of such things must be dear to us. If it were but a picture only, how could we abuse such a picture of His love to us? We are reminded here at once,

[e] washing of water by the word, that he might [f] present the church to himself, glorious, having no [g] spot or [h] wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men also to love their own wives as their [i] own bodies: he that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, [j] even as Christ also the church, for we are [k] members of his body; [we are of his [l] flesh and of his bones].* For this cause shall a man [m] leave his father and mother and shall be united to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This

[e] Tit. 3. 5.
[f] cf. Gen. 2. 22.
[g] Song 4. 7.
[h] cf. Job 16. 8.
[i] ver. 31.
[j] Jno. 6. 51.
[k] 1 Cor. 12. 27.
[l] Gen. 2. 23.
[m] Gen. 2. 24.

* Some omit.

"He is the Saviour of the body," His is not a place of authority merely. The authority itself is that which we yield to with delight, as realizing the title that He has to it. So, says the apostle, follow the pattern, "Even as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." That, of course, could not possibly be meant to limit the higher authority of Christ Himself or of the Father. If there comes to be a question there, if these two are in manifest contradiction to one another, we must obey God and not man. Upon wives, submission to their husbands is enjoined. The husbands are never pressed to keep their wives in subjection. The duty pressed upon them is to *love* their wives, but here, again, the same measure is put before us; it is to be "as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." That, it is plain, carries us back to the beginning, only it was God that presented Eve to Adam and not Adam that presented her to himself. Christ transcends all types, and therefore it is fit and right that this should be manifest to us here. *He* is going to present the Church to Himself. He is diligently perfecting it according to His own mind, that He may be able to do this.

The water washing has nothing ritualistic in it. The apostle explains it here as "by the Word." The power of the Word it is by which the Spirit works. Water could only act as water. God never uses a thing out of its place. He, the Creator, honors His own institution. He does not accomplish spiritual results by material means, nor can He possibly slight that Word, which is the work of the Spirit and by which the Spirit works. It is striking that in the Lord's words to Nicodemus, the living water gives us the Word and the Spirit in relation to one another. The life in the water is the Spirit in the Word. Without the Spirit, the Word itself could accomplish nothing; but, on the other hand, the Spirit of God acts by the Word. If the angel comes to Cornelius, it is only to send him to one who already has in his possession the revelation of God for his soul. How blessed to know that this work, which seems, as we think of it often, to be so little according to the full result which God is bringing us to, that it is, nevertheless, in hands that cannot leave unfinished that which He has begun. It would be as impossible for the Spirit to fail in the accomplishment of that which He has undertaken, as it would have been for Christ to fail in that which He came to do. Thus Christ will present the Church to Himself "glorious," not merely having "no spot," but no "wrinkle" also; no sign of old age about it, no defect; nothing will suit Him then but the bloom and eternity of an eternal youth, the freshness of affections which will never tire, which can know no decay. The Church will be holy and blameless then. After all that we have known of her history, it would be strange to read that, if we did not know how gloriously God maintains His triumph over sin and evil.

Here, then, the Antitype shines fully through the type, but men ought

[n] mystery is great, but I speak in regard to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, do ye also, every one of you, each [o] love his own wife as himself; and the wife [see] that she [p] fear her husband.

2 (vi. 1-4): The family relationship.

2. Children, [q] obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first [r] commandment with promise: That it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye, fathers, [s] provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the [t] discipline and admonition of the Lord.

[n] ch. 3. 3.
[o] Col. 3. 19.
[p] 1 Pet. 3. 2.
[q] Col. 3. 20.
[r] Ex. 20. 12.
[s] Col. 3. 21.
[t] Gen. 18.19. 1 Sam.3.13.

also to "love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife, loveth himself," and here, again, Christ is before us, for no one ever "hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as the Lord the Church." Think of the apostle being able to put it in such a way. "We are members of His body;" we are "of His flesh and of His bones." These are different things which we must not confound. Eve was out of Adam. God formed the woman out of the man. She was thus akin to him in the closest way, but it is not this kinship in the spiritual sense that ever makes us members of His body. That is, as we know, by the Spirit. Both things are accomplished as to us. We have the nature which makes us to be of His kindred, nay, to be of Himself, but then we are brought into relationship, also, in which we are to be surely for all eternity; those who are the instruments of His purposes, the expression of His mind. The two things necessarily go together. The Lord must make us, first of all, such as He can work by before He can work by us.

The wife here is but another aspect of the Body. The apostle, in fact, seems to identify them. The man who loves his wife loves himself, his own flesh, his body, and so the apostle quotes from Genesis here, that "a man shall leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh." This he expressly states to refer to Christ and the Church, but the apostle applies it to the natural relationship: "But let every one of you so love his wife even as himself, and let the wife also reverence her husband."

2. The admonition to children and parents follows. Children are to obey their parents "in the Lord." This preserves, of necessity, His rights. "In the Lord" means in subjection to the authority of Christ, and therefore, of necessity, preserves that authority in everything. The apostle quotes the commandment with the sanction given to it in the Old Testament,—not at all as what is absolutely true for the present time, but to show the importance attached to it by God,—the first commandment having a promise connected with it: "That it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth" or "in the land," as the connection would rather make it. No doubt there is a government of God that goes on through all the present time, in which these things have a measure of fulfilment. The law was, or is still, the rule of God's government, which, however, the peculiar position of Christians upon the earth necessarily modifies as to them. As Christians, they may be cut off from the earth, when, as obedient children simply, they would be preserved upon it; but the Christian loss is gain, as we know, so that the apostle Peter elsewhere refuses, as we may say, to consider it as loss. "Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" But, he immediately adds: "But if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." The suffering for righteousness' sake might seem to be a setting aside of what he had just urged, the question being the most positive form of statement, in fact. No one could harm them in following that which was good, but then, "suffering for righteousness' sake" is *not* finding harm. A Christian cut off from the earth simply goes to heaven and to Christ. The Jew cut off from his land was, at least as to Jewish blessing which was *in* the land, in a different case.

3 (5 9): Sin's transformation retransformed by grace.

3. [u]Bond-servants, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the [v]singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with [w]eye service as men pleasers; but as bond-servants of [x]Christ, doing the will of God from the [y]heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing each shall do, this shall he [z]receive of the Lord again, whether he be bond or free. And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, giving up [a]threatening, knowing that [b]both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no [c]respect of persons with him.

u 1 Pet.2.18. v Col. 3. 22. w Col. 3. 22. x Col. 3. 24. y Col. 3. 23. z Col. 3. 24, 25. a 1 Pet.2.23. b Col. 4. 1. c Col. 3. 25.

Now comes the address to fathers: in the first place not to use authority so as to make it a burden to those under it, not to provoke the children to anger, but to bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. They are to be subject to the authority to which the parents also themselves are subject. This common subjection makes everything right. Divine authority is that which establishes every other authority and in which parents and children become alike brethren and servants.

3. We have lastly the address to servants and masters. To servants, who, in fact, were bondmen, slaves, the word is to obey their "masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling," not on account of anything in their relationship to these, but as serving Christ in it, in singleness of heart as to Christ. How everything is raised in character here! The hardship of bond-service is relieved at once by the ability to make it service to Him, where all service is perfect freedom; yet this, of necessity, makes it pains-taking service too. It will be of the best kind, "not with eye service as men pleasers." If the desire were only to please these, it might be effected by what, after all, is superficial enough; but if we are, as all are, the bond-servants of Christ in spirit, "doing the will of God from the heart," we shall serve with good will "as to the Lord and not to men," and the compensation in due time may be looked for also. "Whatever good shall be done, ye shall receive of the Lord, whether a man be bond or free." Masters, on the other hand, have to remember that they have a Master in heaven. Scripture lowers the hills and raises the valleys. These also serve in their very position as masters of others. They must not, therefore, use their authority with harshness, remembering that their Master is in heaven, and that with Him there is "no acceptance of persons."

Div. 6.

We have now, in closing, a look at the hindrances that there will surely be to the filling just such a position as the epistle gives us. The highest position is that which will be most strongly contested. That in which we are most distinctly Christian, the enemy will oppose with all his power. The conflict in Ephesians is not conflict with the flesh. There is no question that Satan must work upon the flesh if he is to succeed in it. That is true, but we are never exactly called to conflict with the flesh. The lusts of the flesh war against the soul. We are not to war with them, but to abstain from them. If we are "dead to sin" and to reckon ourselves dead, that is not fighting. If there be conflict, it is the result of not having reckoned ourselves dead. Here, however, it is an enemy who is contemplated, and we must not think that the height of our position and the blessedness of the things which are set before us here will bring us upon ground unassailable to the enemy. When Israel got to Canaan, it was just there that they had to fight, and fight for the possession of that which God made their own. We have to remember what is the great point of the conflict here therefore, a conflict which we shall little feel if we are not bent upon possessing ourselves of what is our own. On the other hand, if to lay

DIVISION 6. (Chap. vi. 10–24.)

Conflict and the way of victory.

FINALLY, brethren, be [d]strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the [e]whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the [f]wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is [g]not against blood and flesh, but against [h]principalities, against authorities, against world-rulers of this [i]darkness, against spiritual [hosts] of [j]wickedness in heavenly places.

[d] Josh. 1. 5, 6, 9.
[e] Rom. 13. 12. 2 Cor. 6. 7.
[f] 2 Cor. 2. 11.
[g] 2 Cor. 10. 4.
[h] Col. 2. 15.
[i] Col 1. 13.
[j] Dan. 10. 13, 20.

hold of these heavenly things is the earnest desire of our souls, we shall find, nevertheless, that we need all the strength which is ours and all the resources of God for us, in order to prevail in the conflict. The very first point here is that strength is to be "in the Lord." We are to fight "in the power of His might." How comforting is that title which is given to Christ here! He is, in fact, the Lord of all, and though Satan may seem to have things here entirely under his sway, yet after all, he is a beaten foe, and only part of the "all things" that "work together for good to those that love God."

That does not mean that we can afford to be careless in the least with regard to it. On the contrary, we must "put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand." It will not do to have part of it firmly on and some other part wanting. Satan will be keen to observe the deficiency, and we cannot be rightly for God if we are not for Him in every way. It is, in fact,—as we shall see directly,—this being for Him in every respect, that is our armor to withstand the enemy. Let us notice that it is "against the wiles of the devil" that we have to stand, not against his power, for he has none in the presence of God, but his "wiles" are things that test us. We must have the wisdom of God to meet them with. We must be able to discern "things that differ;" error in its nicest shades and its closest approximation to the truth. It is the devil we are meeting, and that gives character to his assaults. He is the accuser, the accuser of the brethren, the accuser of God, surely, to the brethren. His whole aim is to put distance between the soul and God. If he cannot do that, we are safe. But the struggle then is not against flesh and blood; it is not such a struggle, after all, as Israel under Joshua had. Kings seemed to swarm in Canaan. There were abundance of principalities with which they had to deal, all of which have a correspondence in our case. Against us are principalities and powers, "the rulers of the darkness of this world." Here is a hint,—more than that,—of the method of attack. The darkness is the "darkness of this world." It is the world which Satan knows how to use and which he will bring in to cloud our perception as Christians, our realization of the things that are our own.

Thus, in the book of Joshua, we find that while the Canaanite leaders answer to these evil spirits in the heavenly places, yet, in fact, as soon as ever Israel got into the land, Jericho had to fall, and Jericho is the world itself. Yet, that same world judged in the mass, may in detail spring up again, and thus Ai, in opposition against which they failed, reminds us at once of Jericho, even in its ashes.

Then follows the deceit of Gibeon, and all through, it is the power of the world in some shape that is pictured in what they have to meet. In fact, Satan's aim will be surely, with the heavenly man, to bring in the things of earth through which he has of necessity to pass, to cloud the brightness of that heavenly blessing. Here, of necessity, is a strife for us from which we cannot escape, for one's sphere of duty is in the world, in which we have to serve God. Our occupation is in it, and thus we are brought face to face with that in which the power of Satan easily displays itself. Sight and sense will seek to prevail against faith, not so much by what is open attack as by simply the

Wherefore take up the whole armor of God that ye may be able to [k]withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having [l]girt about your loins with [m]truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having [n]shod your feet with the preparation of the [o]gospel of peace: over all, tak-

[k] Ps. 37. 19.
[l] Lk. 12. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 13.
[m] Jno. 17. 17.
[n] Deut. 29. 5. Song 7. 1.
[o] Col. 1. 20.

crowding out of that which is the joy and power of the soul. We need, therefore, to take "the whole armor of God," in order to be "able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." There are special evil days, that we shall all recognize. There are times when the power of the enemy is gathered against us in a very unmistakable way,—after all, perhaps, not the times in which we are in the greatest danger. After success has been obtained in some sore strife, and we are in the joy of victory, then there may be, on the other hand, a carelessness brought in by the very victory itself, which may allow us to fall, as it might seem, without a battle. Gideon defeats the hosts of the Midianites and Amalekites, a host without number. When he has gained the victory, he falls without a battle at all, as we realize in the ephod which he makes, which is, in fact, a thing bred of the very place which God has given him. He has offered sacrifices before at God's command. This entitles him, as it seems to him, to intrude upon the functions of the regular priesthood, and this connects, no doubt, with the further and worse failure in his family afterwards. When he has refused the kingship in Israel for himself, his son Abimelech grasps it in a more open manner. Thus, when we have done all, we have to stand. Nothing but humility, the constant sense of our dependence upon Another, the watchfulness which comes from this consciousness of inherent weakness, will enable us to find constant success.

The details of the armor are now presented to us. First of all, our loins are to be "girt about with truth." "Truth," notice, comes here first,—the action of the Word; and what does it do for us? It girds the loins. It prevents our garments, our habits, as we may interpret it, hindering us. The power of heavenly truth upon our souls will make us, in our whole character here, simply as those who are passing through and not settling down. Our garments in that way will never be loose about us. The strife is constant. As far as it goes, we must not expect rest. We have a rest, indeed, in Christ at all times, but that is another thing. The time of rest has not come. We are to be as soldiers of Christ, who, as the apostle says, are not to entangle themselves with the things of this world. When the enemy is meeting us with the darkness of this world, how important for us, first of all, this girdle about the loins! Next comes the "breastplate of righteousness." The breastplate covers a vital part. If indeed there is not righteousness with us, the accuser has a fair means of attack. He is Adonizedek, the lord of righteousness. Righteousness is his constant plea before God when he would sift us, as he sifted Job or as he sifted Peter. If we are God's wheat, we must expect such sifting, which accomplishes, after all, as we know already, both in Job's case and in Peter's, that which is blessing for us; but at the same time it puts us to the test. Righteousness, let us remember, is practical consistency with our position and relationships, and thus if we are indeed heavenly men, this righteousness will be a very different thing from what the world would call such. The only righteous thing for us is to be practically what we are professedly in every thing, and even the showing of mercy is only righteousness for those who have had mercy shown them, nor can righteousness exist apart from the love which we owe men at all times. Thus, the "breastplate of righteousness" is indeed important, and we see how the truth must have gone before it, to put us in the place which defines for us what practical righteousness must be with us.

Next, we have the feet shod for the way. We remember, as to Israel, how perfectly their feet were shod, how their shoes never wore out, spite of the flinty

ing up the [p]shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the [q]fiery darts of the wicked one. Have* also the [r]helmet of salvation, and the [s]sword of the Spirit, which is the [t]saying of God: [u]praying at all

* Literally, "have received."

[p] Ps. 91. 4.
[q] cf. 1 Pet. 1. 7.
[r] cf. 1 Thess. 5. 8.
[s] Heb. 4. 12.
[t] Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10.
[u] 1 Thess. 5. 17.

desert they were traversing all the forty years of their journey through. Our feet are shod differently, but, of course, in a higher way. Our "preparation" is that which is wrought by the effect of "the gospel of peace." It is not a question of carrying the gospel to others. It is our feet that are shod with this "preparation;" it is a peace which God has preached to us in it, the peace with Himself, which gives peace, therefore, as to all things: "For, if God be for us, who can be against us?" It is this peace that arms the feet, then, for all the difficulties of the way. What circumstances are there which are not in His hand? What difficulties can be too much for Him? The wilderness is still the wilderness. The trials and difficulties are there. They are best met in the consciousness of our being unable to meet them, but they must be met also with the faith that the God of peace Himself is with us and that He will give us peace always, by all means. That is the Lord's word for His people. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace." Here are shoes that never wear out. How blessed the experience of the way in which God has furnished us thus!

The body is thus perfectly provided for, but still we have need of the shield of faith "over all," as we should read. This is that practical confidence in God which should never fail us at all times, even in the midst of the sense of failure and the need of self-judgment. Let the armor be fitted to us as it may, there is always room for some apprehension, if we simply think about ourselves, that after all, somewhere we may have left opportunity for the enemy; but the shield of faith covers all the armor. Whatever we may imagine with regard to this, and with the consciousness of our feebleness at all times, the confidence in God, which should never slacken with us, is our security and rest; only we must remember that the putting on of the armor comes first. There must be honest endeavor to have all right in this way. We must not try to shield a body evidently exposed, with a cover of this kind, but when we have all apparently right, we have need still of that practical confidence which, let us notice here, has for its object specially to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." These "fiery darts" are indeed terrible weapons. The fire speaks of the wrath of God, of judgment, at least, from Him, and it is with this that the enemy would assail us. He is, we must remember, the accuser. His aim, as already said, is to bring distance in some sense between our souls and God. How great a necessity, therefore, to maintain this happy confidence in Him, which, while it does not excuse failure in the least, yet, in utter weakness, finds all its confidence in Him who has undertaken for us. "All the fiery darts of the wicked one" can thus be "quenched" by the "shield of faith." Besides this, we are to have the "helmet of salvation," not, as in Thessalonians, the "hope of salvation." There it is the world with which we are in conflict. Here it is the consciousness of a salvation already attained, which sustains us against the enemy. This is not a hope. It is a realized certainty. This may well give us complete possession of ourselves in the peril of conflict. The helmet covers the head. We are preserved by it from blows which would rob us of what we rightly call "presence of mind." It is this presence of mind in the midst of perils which is the best kind of courage, and the salvation of God is that which may well secure it for us.

Then we have one and only one offensive weapon, "the sword of the Spirit," the word of God, as that which enables us to penetrate all the wiles of the enemy, to expose and baffle him. How impossible it will be to oppose that of

seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the [v]Spirit, and [w]watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for [z]all saints, and on [y]my behalf that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth to make known with boldness the [z]mystery of the gospel, for which I am an [a]ambassador in chains, that in it I may have [b]boldness as I ought to speak.

v Jude 20.
w Col. 4. 2.
x cf. ch. 1. 15.
y Col. 4. 3.
z Rom. 16. 25.
a 2 Cor. 5. 20.
b Acts 4. 29, 31.

which we are not positively sure whether it be his voice or the voice of God Himself! If there is any confusion as to this,—and the great work of the enemy is to promote this confusion,—of necessity we have no right to dismiss from our mind the very thing which may be, nevertheless, merely his temptation. How much we want to be armed, therefore, by "the sword of the Spirit"! How we must have God's word furnishing us at all points if we are to be ready for every form of assault! But let us notice here, that it is not exactly "the sword of the Spirit which is the *word* of God." It is "the saying" rather than the "Word;" that is to say, if we think of the Word of God, it is the whole book which He has put into our hands. What we want, in fact, for the conflict, is the special word, the text which suits the occasion, and that is what "the sword of the Spirit" really is. It is the word of God as applied by the Spirit of God, used therefore, with the wisdom of God, as with our Lord in the wilderness, where always the special text is brought forward which decides what is before Him. So it must be for us; but for this, let us remind ourselves again, we must be in the energy of the Spirit. The use of the sword requires practice and to be on the alert and watchful.

All this is closed with what John Bunyan numbers amongst the weapons. It is the weapon "all prayer," and it is very striking as coming in here, after all the high and blessed truth into which the apostle has been leading us through all the epistle. There is no text, perhaps, which insists so fully upon the necessity of prayer as that which we have here. "Praying at all times, with all prayer," and not mere prayer, but "supplication," that is, earnest beseeching, the soul thoroughly conscious of its need and that in the Spirit, guided by the Spirit in that which we seek. How much prayer is there which is merely the contention of our own wills with God, which, however earnestly we may pour it out, leaves us rather exhausted with the contention than at rest in having made known our wants to Him!

But this is not enough. We are to "watch unto prayer." We are to watch "with all perseverance" and not merely as burdened with our own individual needs. Our needs, surely, must remind us of the needs of others. Our needs are the needs of others, and God, in making us realize the one, would make us realize the other. Therefore, the apostle adds: "And supplication for all saints." If we think of Israel in the land, we can realize the common cause which united them, and for ourselves there is the same common cause that unites us, and how much the defeat of others by the power of the enemy, the entanglement of others with his wiles, must add to the strife for ourselves also; yet it will not do, of course, to pray for others as realizing simply our need of others. Others too, need us, and the heart of a saint, if he be a saint at all, must respond to such an appeal for others as the consciousness of his own need makes to him. The apostle puts himself here along with the rest, as one who is in need of the prayers of the saints, and his cause is indeed the cause of all. It is Christ for whom he labors. It is the saints, therefore, whom he is serving, and the desire of his heart is that utterance may be given him to open his mouth that he may make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which he is an ambassador in bonds, that he may have that boldness with regard to it that he ought to have. How thoroughly he himself had the consciousness of his weakness, so that he not only seeks God for himself, but would unite others in seeking God for him. We think of such a man as the apostle as almost beyond

But that ye also may [c]know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; whom I have sent unto you for this very thing, that ye may know of our affairs and that he may [d]encourage your hearts. [e]Peace be to the brethren and [f]love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [g]Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in [h]incorruption.

[c] Col. 4. 8.
[d] 2 Cor. 1. 6. 2 Cor. 7. 13.
[e] 1 Pet. 5. 14.
[f] 1 Cor. 16. 24.
[g] Col. 4. 18.
[h] Tit. 2. 7.

the need of this; but, in fact, there is no one beyond it, and the success of that for which he stood is indeed the common concern of all. How our hearts should at all times be engaged with it!

This ends in substance the epistle. A few words simply are added with regard to himself, his own affairs which he counts upon the saints being interested in. Tychicus, therefore, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things of this sort known to them, while, on his part, he has sent him, not simply that they might know of his affairs, but that their own hearts might be encouraged. He concludes with the salutation: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," and widens this according to the character of the epistle here, which is scarcely a local one; "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF COLOSSIANS

THE epistle to the Ephesians has already carried us to the height of Christian position. Consequently, we have no further step to take in this direction, but as ever, the carrying out of the truth thus revealed is now to be proved in practice. The fourth epistle here gives us, in fact, if not exactly the walk through the world, at least the furnishing for that walk, that which would answer to the first part of the book of Numbers. A consequence of this is, that we necessarily find the truths of the former epistles brought forward into this. The truths of Romans, Galatians, Ephesians are all found in Colossians. Along with Romans, we have the man in Christ, dead to sin, and to law. With Galatians, we find him also as having died to the world, while the truth in Ephesians, that we are "quickened with Christ and raised up with Christ" is equally before us; but none of them give us, on the other hand, what characterizes the epistle here. We need all these truths for practical use in walking through the world; but the great and governing truth in Colossians is Christ Himself, not even our place in Him, although that enters into it, but the Lord Himself, the Object before the heart.

This is very clearly to be seen in comparing those parallel passages with Ephesians which are so noticeable here. Thus, if in Ephesians the apostle says that "God in Christ hath forgiven you," Colossians has it: "Even as *Christ* hath forgiven you." If Ephesians speaks of the "new man" as "created in righteousness and holiness of truth," Colossians speaks of the "new man" as "renewed in knowledge," "where there is neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but *Christ is all* and in all." If Ephesians bids us "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," Colossians bids us walk worthy of the *Lord*. The central verse in Colossians is that "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily" and that we are filled up in Him. Thus, the soul, as one may say, and as most needed for a walk through the world, is under government here. We have received Christ Jesus the Lord and we are to "walk in Him." We are to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," and we "are translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love." This, then is our main furnishing, as we may say, for the path, while we are told directly of the strength that we receive by the power of His glory before the soul, and are exhorted to hold fast the Head, from which the whole body is ministered to and increases

with the increase of God. The truth of the Church is here, but is not dwelt on. It is the Head upon which the apostle insists.

A kindred and beautiful thing, (at first sight, however, seeming unaccountable,) is that the Spirit of God is only mentioned once, and that incidentally. We have no *doctrine* of the Spirit. How completely in accordance is this with what we know of His work, who has come to take of the things of Christ and to show them to us—not to speak of His own. In the doctrinal epistles which have preceded this, on the contrary, the Spirit is dwelt upon in all connections. Here we are face to face with the Object that the Spirit presents. The dew has brought the manna, and the dew exhales and leaves the manna for our use. Thus, then, we have the character of the epistle. There is not in it the truth of our being seated together in heavenly places in Christ, but this results from the peculiar character of Colossians, as giving us the path through the world, while, if our own position is less fully developed, the glory of Christ compensates for this, and, as has been already said, the very truth fundamental to our position, that we are in Christ before God, in measure involves this.

There are four divisions in the epistle:

1. (Chap. i. 1–18) puts us at the beginning under Christ as Head and Lord.
2. (Chap. i. 19–29) gives us the double sphere of the gospel and the Church, with the double ministry entrusted to Paul in connection with these.
3. (Chap. ii.): We are filled up in Him, in whom all fulness dwells.
4. (Chaps. iii., iv.) gives us, as usual, the practical consequences.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i. 1–18.)

The sufficiency of Christ as Head and Lord.

1 (i. 1-8): The knowledge of divine grace in truth, the beginning in the soul.

1. PAUL an [a]apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timotheus the brother, to the saints and [b]faithful brethren in Christ which are in Colosse. [c]Grace to you and peace from God our Father [and the Lord Jesus Christ].* We give [d]thanks unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,† having heard of your [e]faith in Christ Jesus and of the [f]love which ye have toward all saints, because of [g]the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

[a] 2 Cor. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1. [b] Eph. 1. 1. [c] *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. [d] Rom. 1. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 4. Eph. 1. 16. [e] Rom. 1. 8. Eph. 1. 15. 1 Thess. 1. 3. [f] Heb. 6. 10. [g] Heb. 3. 1.

* Some omit. † Or, "continually [when] praying for you."

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE first division, then, starts us, as it were, upon our journey. The Colossians are presented to us as "holy and faithful brethren in Christ," of whom the apostle has heard, possessors of a living faith which grows and bears fruit. He prays that it may increase, and that they may be filled with the full knowledge of His will, so as to walk worthy of the Lord; after which we are shown the One who is Lord of the individual as well as the Head of the body, the Church, and His full glories are made known to us.

1. The Colossians are seen, then, in the first place, as those who have received the knowledge of divine grace in truth, the beginning of everything for the soul, the living and active principle which at once suggests to us the fruits following, the result in practical life which the epistle insists upon. The apostle addresses himself to them as an "apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God," associating Timothy with himself in his constant, gracious manner. He owns the holiness and faithfulness which characterizes them as brethren in Christ and which gives him courage and confidence in addressing them. As holy, they are not only separate from evil, but separate to God, the first necessity for fruit. The field that bears it must be fenced off from all that would intrude from the world around. They are faithful to the position that God has given them and the light they have received,—another and equal necessity, but implied in the former. They have the "virtue" of which the apostle Peter speaks, and which leads on to knowledge. It is to those who hold in living power that which they have received, that God can still give more abundantly, but they need, as we all do, "grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

He begins now with thanking God in their behalf, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which, as we have already seen in Ephesians, presents to us the Lord as the One who has given God His character for the soul; and as the Son of the Father, introduces us to all the affections of the heart; divine affections, which so need to be cultivated if there is to be fruit at all. To Him then, he gives thanks continually, on praying for them, having heard that concerning them which encourages his prayer:—not only "faith in Christ Jesus," but "love towards all the saints," a love which manifests its character in that very fact. It is not simply personal, individual, and which may spring out of other connections, but love to saints as saints wherever they find them. This is

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, even as it is also in all the [h] world, bearing [i] fruit and growing, even as among you also, from the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in [j] truth: even as ye learned of [k] Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondman, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you, who also declared unto us your love in the [l] Spirit.

2 (1. 9 14): A prayer for increase.

2. For this cause, we also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for [m] you and to ask that ye may [n] be filled with the full knowledge of his [o] will in all [p] wisdom and spiritual understanding [so as] to walk worthy of the [q] Lord unto all [r] pleasing, bearing fruit in every

[h] ver. 23.
[i] Luke 8.15.
[j] Tit.2.11,12.
[k] ch. 4. 12. Phile. 23.
[l] Gal. 5. 22.
[m] Eph.1.15, 16.
[n] 1 Cor. 1. 5.
[o] Rom.12.2.
[p] Eph. 1.17.
[q] *cf.* Eph. 4. 1.
[r] Rom.15.2. 1 Cor.10.33. *cf.*Gal.1.10. 1 Thess.2.4.

that true love of the brethren which the apostle gives as an evidence that those who possess it have passed from death unto life. He thanks God because of the hope laid up for them in the heavens, the hope which is to energize them upon the way, pilgrims and strangers as they are now, with no portion in the world through which they pass; and thus the whole energy of their souls laying hold upon that which is invisible.

This hope they found in the word of the truth of the gospel which had come to them, as it was going out in all the world; and which bore fruit and was growing among them, as wherever it was received. This knowledge seems to have been ministered to them by Epaphras, of whom he speaks as his fellow-servant, and for them a faithful minister of Christ. The work manifested the workman, and their love in the Spirit had been manifested towards the apostle himself by his means.

2. He has already said that a living faith is a growing faith. Growth is a necessity of life, and where the life is eternal life, there is here no limit of it reached, as in natural growth. We grow on till we reach eternity. Important it is to realize this,—salvation is so often simply looked at as the end itself which is to be reached, instead of the beginning, that which starts us upon the road. It is Christ in glory who is the end before us, and if we are really travellers, the light of that glory will be shining upon us more and more fully all the way.

He was not content, however, to reason that this, of necessity, would be so. He did not cease praying and asking for them, that they might be filled with full knowledge of the will of God, a thing not gained in a short time, although, as possessing the Holy Spirit, every honest soul will find practical competence for the path which he has to tread; but the full knowledge of His will will take nothing else than the full word of God to minister it to us, and here it is not to be a theoretical knowledge, but knowledge in all wisdom, a knowledge which is real for us, and applies itself to all the circumstances of the way. The right understanding of it is spiritual understanding, not merely mental reception; though that does not mean that we are to undervalue the mind, which is, in fact, that in us through which God conveys these things, but the Spirit of God must give it its proper character. The result of it, the desire of the heart, is to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, an immense responsibility indeed as servants of His to show in the world what His service means; bearing fruit, therefore, in every good work and growing by the true knowledge of God. This is found, of course, in the revelation of Christ that is being made to us. Christ is the Life within us, and that which ministers, therefore, to the life we have received. Christ is before us now in all the might of His glory for our souls, that which strengthens for the way, for all that is found here in the world so contrary to Him and to us; but we are furnished thus to all endurance and long-suffering with joy. These things are in God's hand, ordained for us only to bring out in us the Christ-likeness which belongs to a life in Him, to

good [s]work and growing by the true knowledge of [t]God; strengthened with all power, according to the might of his [u]glory, to all endurance and long-suffering with [v]joy; giving thanks unto the [w]Father who hath made us meet for the sharing of the portion of the [x]inheritance of the saints in [y]light; who hath delivered us from the authority of [z]darkness, and translated [us] into the kingdom of the Son of his [a]love; in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of [b]sins.

s Eph. 2. 10.
t 2 Pet. 3.18.
u Eph. 3.16.
v 2 Cor. 8. 2. Heb. 10 34.
w Eph. 5.20.
x *cf.* Eph. 1. 14. Gal. 4. 6, 7.
y 1 Thes. 5.5.
z Eph. 6. 12.
a Eph. 1.22. *cf.* Rev. 3. 21.
b Eph. 1. 7.

separate us from a world which thus manifests itself for what it is, and to make us realize only the more the completeness of satisfaction which is in that which is our own. We see how Paul's gospel enters, of necessity, into all this. The revelation of Christ is that which is continually before him. Christ is the Goal of his race, and the recompensing Prize, as he will tell us fully in Philippians. Here it is not exactly the pressing after Him which is brought before us, but the power resulting from the apprehension of what He is, the One who has been in death for us and who has now everything in His hand. What a thing to assure and rest the heart!

But he goes on now to the fitness which is already ours to partake of the portion of the saints in light,—and wonderful this is. He does not say that God is *making* us fit for it, as we might imagine to be more suitable to be said; we are already *made* fit, and fit for the portion of the holy ones in that light which would discover the least spot or defect. And strange it would seem to many, in view of the indisputable fact that evil is in us still and that the good in us is yet far short of full development, that we are already meet for the inheritance. To have *title* to it is another thing. Title we should easily recognize that we all have; but a child may have most abundant title to an inheritance for which, as yet, he is by no means "fit." We have not merely the title, we have the fitness also. We can only realize this as we realize the distinctness of the new nature which God has imparted to us. The flesh is in us, but it is not ourselves; we are not identified with it, not in it before God. As a consequence, if the Lord should take us, in whatever way He be pleased to take us, home to Himself, the flesh is gone, and there remains nothing but that which is according to His mind. The development of the life we have is another matter, and we need not consider it here; but even a babe in Christ has fitness, therefore, for his portion. Well may we give thanks to the Father who has accomplished this for us.

We are delivered, as the apostle goes on to say, from the authority of darkness. Darkness may be also in measure in us, but it has no *title* over us. We are in the light as Christians. Whether we realize it aright or not, depends upon how far the eye is single in us; but we are practically in the darkness, in any measure of it, *only by our own consent.* God has translated us into another kingdom, put us under another authority, and that the authority of His own dear Son.

This is the only passage in which we find the present kingdom of Christ spoken of exactly in this character. As Son of Man, He waits for His Kingdom. He has not yet received it. He waits upon the right hand of God; but whatever this may imply, that He is still waiting, yet as seated on the Father's throne, in that place to which His title plainly is found in His eternal relationship to the Father, He has, in fact, all things in His hand now. This can only seem in any wise a contradiction to the fact of His waiting for His Kingdom as Son of Man, if we fail to realize that the Kingdom in that character is taken for the final setting in order of all things for eternity, which is put into Christ's hands expressly as the Son of Man. All judgment is thus committed to Him, and as by man the old creation fell away from God, so by man everything must be restored. Thus He is, as Isaiah gives it to us, the "Father of Eternity."

3 (i. 15-18): Christ, the Image of God in creation and the risen Head of the Church.

3. Who is the image of the invisible [c]God, the first-born of all [d]creation, for by him were all things [e]created, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities, all things have been created by him and for [f]him. And he is before [g]all, and all

c 2 Cor. 4. 4. Heb. 1. 3.
d Rev. 3.14.
e Heb. 1. 2. John 1. 3.
f *cf.* ch.3.11.
g John 17.5.

He is the One who is going to bring everything into subjection to God. We, in the meanwhile, are the fruit of His work, delivered from the opposing power of evil and brought into the Kingdom of light and peace, as those redeemed by His blood and having the forgiveness of sins. Here, therefore, we have marked out for us distinctly the character of the truth which the apostle presents to us. Already separated from the world, separated to God, we are those who are given to Christ and put into His hand to be led on through the world by the attractive power of what is in Himself, to Himself beyond it. In the "Kingdom of the Son of His love," what can be wanting to us, even though the full blessing has not come?

But we are here filling a place which has its own distinctness of privilege, a place that, in the same way, we can never fill again. We are here for Christ in the midst of a world opposed to Him, and treading in His steps who is the Author and Finisher of faith in His own Person, and who has left us an example that we should walk in His steps. This is our privilege now, and how greatly we should value it! We have not merely to go out of the world and to be with Christ where He is, which will be accomplished for us in His own time, which our souls must, of course, desire at any time; nevertheless that which God is working for us now and that which, we may say, He is working through us now, will be seen in the day to come as amply sufficient causes of delay for a little while, that, in the place of Christ's humiliation, we may learn Him better so, and acquire that mind of Christ which we have use for, in participation with Him in that which is to come.

3. We come now then fully to look at Christ Himself. We have been shown our competence for this. We can look without any harassing question as to our part in Him or our fitness for the blessing which we have before us. We ought to be capable, therefore, of full occupation with Himself. That is what the epistle to the Romans has already shown us, and that is what deliverance means really; deliverance from ourselves, in order that we may be engaged with Him, to be in whose blest company is to grow in His likeness.

Who is He then of whom we are speaking? He is, says the apostle, first of all, the Image of the Invisible God, the perfect and exact Expression of One who is nowhere seen as He is seen in Him. The invisible God has become visible to us, of course to faith; but we have the full revelation of God in Him, who, in order that He may reveal God, has come down into that which is His own creation, has taken His place in it, of necessity, thus, at the Head of it also. If He who is the Image of the Invisible God takes His place in creation, it must be as the First-born of it all, the Beginning, as He says Himself in the epistle to Laodicea, "the Beginning of the creation of God."

Here is His link at once with all that is to receive blessing through Him. Apart from those who really set themselves outside it, who refuse and turn aside from this grace of His, all creation is thus linked with Him for blessing. He has become Man. He has taken not only a human spirit, but a soul and a body. In His unutterable love, He has linked Himself, as one may say, with the very dust of the earth, that He might assure us that, of all which God has created, nothing is below His thought. He will lose nothing of it all, but bring it into that which was His mind for it in creating it; for He who has come into this wondrous place,—the very humiliation of which is glory too,—is the One "by whom all things were created, things in heaven and things on earth, visible or invisible," however high, however low you go, "thrones or dominions,

things subsist together by [h]him. And he is the head of the body, the [i]church; who is the beginning, first-born from among the [j]dead, that in all things he might have the [k]pre-eminence.

[h] Heb. 1. 3.
[i] Eph. 1. 22.
[j] Rev. 1. 5.
[k] Eph. 1.22.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. i. 19–29.)

The double sphere of the gospel and the church, with the double ministry entrusted to Paul in connection with these.

1 (i. 19, 20): All fulness pleased to dwell in Christ for the reconciliation of all things.

1. FOR in him all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to [l]dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to [m]itself, having made peace by the blood of his [n]cross, by him, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.

[l] *cf.* ch. 2. 9.
[m] *cf.* Eph. 1. 10, 14. Heb. 9. 23.
[n] Eph. 2.14.

or principalities or powers;" the highest are but His creatures, and have not only been created "*by* Him" but "*for* Him."

What a wonderful light does that throw upon creation itself and upon its destiny! Christ is not only the One under whom it is; He is not only the One who will bring it all into blessing, but He, the One who has become the Man Christ Jesus, is the One for whom it all exists. Christ, then, and that grace which is manifested in Him,—that manifestation itself, which is in itself grace,—is that which is the great purpose of God in creation. He must manifest Himself; He must make His creatures know Him. He could not possibly leave them without the full display of all His heart. He wants to be near them. He wants to have them near Himself. Christ is the fulness of God's heart thus told out, and as He is before all, as He is the One who holds all things together now, this purpose cannot fail of accomplishment.

But there is another sphere, still, in which He is the Head, and considering that it too is needed for the full display of divine grace, (as it is that, as we have heard in Ephesians, in which God is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, and in which His glory is to be displayed forever,) it must of necessity find mention here. It is not to be lost simply in the thought of creation. He is the Head of creation, but He is also the Head of the body, the Church; and as this, He is the Beginning, a new Beginning, a First-Born, not in creation simply, but from among the dead. Here, full redemptive power manifests itself. He is seen Master of all the evil and not merely Master to subdue it, but making it all show forth His praise. Thus He is pre-eminent in all things. This is the One under whom God has put us to find our way, upheld by His grace, to the place where He Himself awaits us. How blessed should be a path upon which this light shines more and more fully to the perfect day!

Div. 2.

Here, then, there is a double sphere marked out for our contemplation. There is the sphere of creation into which Christ in His grace has come, and there is the sphere of the Church through which His love to His creatures is to be most signally manifested. We now find these two spheres specially dwelt upon, and the apostle's double ministry in God's wonderful grace to him, answering to these two spheres. He is minister of the gospel in all the world, minister of the Church, the mystery of God now revealed.

1. "In Him," then, "all the fulness was pleased to dwell." The whole Godhead has in Him manifested itself and come forth to bless and to redeem. If we think of Christ, we must not separate from Him the Father's thought and purpose, the Father's heart told out, and if we think of Him again, He is the One whom the Spirit of God exalts and glorifies, the One in whom, as we see Him here upon earth, the fulness of the Spirit dwelt. The whole activity of

2 (i. 21-23): Of those enemies before.

2. And you who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath he °reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable and irreproachable before ᵖhim; if indeed ye abide in the faith, grounded and ᵍfirm, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which hath been preached in the whole creation which is under ʳheaven, whereof I Paul was made ˢminister.

3 (i. 24-29): The mystery filling up the word.

3. Now I rejoice in sufferings for ᵗyou, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my ᵘflesh, for his body's sake, which is the ᵛchurch, whereof I was made minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to complete the word of God, [even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and ʷgenerations, but now hath been manifested to his saints, to whom God would make known what

o Rom. 5. 10, 11. 2 Cor. 5. 18.
p Eph. 5. 27.
q Heb. 3. 14.
r ch. 1. 6.
s 1 Cor. 1. 17. Gal. 2. 2.
t Phil 2. 17.
u Acts 9. 4, 5.
v Eph. 1. 23.
w Eph. 3. 2-6.

the Godhead is manifested thus in our behalf. It is Christ as Man who is still spoken of. His Manhood it is that is the tabernacle of Deity. We must not so think of His humiliation as to forget, for a moment, the glory that was ever His. He has come down, in fact, to fulfil the purpose which none but He could possibly fulfil. Sin has come in. Question has been raised by the presence of it with regard to God Himself. If left to this, God's whole place with regard to creation is compromised. Thus, as has been said elsewhere, He could not, apart from the cross, from that which has fully displayed His holiness and the judgment of sin, while displaying His love for His creatures, take up even the heavens themselves as that in which He could find delight and display His glory. By Him, therefore, God came to reconcile all things to Himself, not simply individuals, but the whole frame, as it were, of the universe. There is not a part of it to which the power of the blood of the cross does not penetrate. Our possession in the heavens is purchased by it. The earth, too, is purchased. Things on the earth or things in the heavens will alike be made once more to be according to God's mind, objects of complacent delight.

2. But if the heavens and earth are thus reconciled by His blood, there are those also who were once alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, in whom it manifests its power. Here the reconciliation must, of necessity, include the bringing of enemies out of their enmity; while His work, the work of the cross, was needed in a double sense for this, needed as that which has made atonement for iniquity, needed as that which, by the power of divine grace in it, conquers the heart for Him. How great a triumph when we can be thus presented holy and unblamable and irreproachable before God! The apostle puts in here a word of caution needed by those amongst whom there may still be those who, whatever their profession, have not, in fact, received the reconciliation. The test of this will be a faith in which men abide on a firm foundation, not moved away from the hope of the gospel, a gospel which is being proclaimed indeed in the whole creation which is under heaven, and of which Paul himself was, in a special sense, the minister. We must remember here what has been elsewhere shown us, that Paul was not only *a* minister of the gospel, having his place with the rest who ministered it, but was in a special sense *the* minister of the gospel, which had with him a fulness of blessing which we find nowhere else.

3. But this was only a part of that which was specially committed to him. He was suffering, manifestly (he says this as writing now from his prison at Rome) on account of the Church, Christ's body; filling up, as he puts it here, that which remained of the sufferings of Christ for them. Christ had been

are the riches of the glory of this [z]mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of [y]glory; whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all [z]wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ. Whereunto also I labor, striving according to his working which worketh in me in power.

[x] ch. 2. 3.
[y] Rom. 5. 2.
[z] Acts 20. 20.

DIVISION 3. (Chap. ii.)

Filled up in Him in whom all the fulness dwells.

1 (ii. 1-5): All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge herein.

1. FOR I would have you know what conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the [a]flesh; that their

[a] Rom. 1. 14.

pleased to link him in a special way with Himself, in labor for this purpose so dear to Him, the having a body, a people in the nearness of that relation to Himself, near as none other could be, and the revelation of which now completed the word of God—filled it out fully, no principle of truth remaining unrevealed. Of this, then, he was minister; of the mystery hidden from ages and generations but now made manifest to His saints, the long pent up secret of the heart that must now disclose itself; the riches of the glory of this mystery being found, not amongst Jews but amongst Gentiles,—Christ among Gentiles, not therefore glory come, as it will be when He takes His place in the midst of Israel, but the *hope* of glory belonging to another sphere, and as we know, a wonderfully higher one. This, says the apostle, was his aim, then, "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, to present every man perfect in Christ." He works according to the full largeness in which the gospel itself goes out. He would have "every man," not merely those who actually are laid hold of by it, but in the thought of his heart, in that for which, if it might be, he works, "*every* man presented perfect in Christ." This is the character, manifestly, as we have seen, of Paul's epistles. The position in Christ is what is before him continually. This is what he would bring us up to. His writings are therefore the Leviticus of the New Testament. They open the sanctuary, and that to bring us in there. For this he was toiling. For this he was in conflict; and Christ, as it were, toiling in him, working in the power of His grace in the instrument He had chosen.

Div. 3.

Christ then, is He in whom all the fulness dwells. We are now to have distinctly the part which is given us in this fulness. We are to be filled up in it, and that practically for our blessing now, not at some time to come; but that this may be manifested in us here by the way.

1. The apostle tells us, therefore, of the conflict that he was in with regard to them, but specially as to those whose face he had not yet seen in the flesh, his responsibility towards whom was not altered by this fact.

He is in conflict also, as knowing what the world is in which the saints are found. The greater the blessing, the greater incentive to the enemy, if possible, to take it from them; and alas, with this, the surer, if we think of men as such, that they will demonstrate their incapacity of themselves to hold it. But Paul's purpose is the encouragement of those to whom he writes,—not discouragement. The warnings of what man as man is, of the flesh that dwells in us all, the practical warnings which result from the outbreak of this also, alas, in Christians, are still only to discourage *self*-confidence, never to move one from the assurance that he should have in God. He seeks, therefore, to encourage their hearts, and that they may be united together in love, the true binding principle, in the possession of all that was their own, the riches that God would

hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full [b]assurance of understanding to the full knowledge of the mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and [c]knowledge. And I say this that no one may delude you with persuasive speech. For, though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

2 (ii. 6-8): Rooted and built up in Him.

2. As, therefore, ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk ye in [d]him, rooted and built up in [e]him, and stablished in the [f]faith, even as ye were [g]taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Take heed that there be no one who shall make spoil of you through philosophy and vain [h]deceit, after the tradition of [i]men, after the rudiments of the [j]world, and not after [k]Christ.

b *cf.* Heb. 6. 11. Heb. 10.22.
c 1 Cor.2.10.
d 1 Jno. 2. 6.
e Hos. 14. 8.
f 2 Cor. 1.21.
g Eph. 4.21.
h 1 Tim. 6. 20.
i Mk. 7. 9.
j Gal. 4. 3, 7.
k ch. 3. 11.

give them in full assurance of understanding. How much is implied in this! There is to be no failure with us as to the distinct, definite, assured apprehension of all this blessing which God has given us, the full knowledge of the mystery of God of which he has spoken, in which are hid for us now "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This may seem a strange thing to say that, in that which is only revealed at the present time, all treasures of this kind should be found; but it is manifest that in speaking to Christians, everything depends upon their being in possession of that which makes them distinctly *Christian*. Except as in this Christian place ourselves, we have not even the right knowledge of other things. For instance, if we do not realize the difference between the Church and Israel, how can we know even Israel aright? How can we know the Old Testament without being in possession of what is specifically ours in the New? He says here, as so constantly with him, "wisdom" as well as "knowledge," putting indeed wisdom first; for without the power to apply, what right gain could there be in the knowledge which is to be applied?

He goes on to intimate his knowledge of the power of the enemy which was abroad, and which would, by persuasive speech, seek to take from them the blessing; but he rejoiced, absent indeed in the flesh, yet with them in spirit, as seeing their order and the firmness of their faith in Christ. It is plain therefore that he does not, as some think, realize in them the beginning of any special form of evil, but that the warnings which we find here and there through the epistle are necessary to the character of it, as having to do with their walk in the world, a place in which every danger would necessarily beset them. He has, as we can see also, not merely those in mind whom he is addressing now at Colosse, but us also, for whom the Spirit of God is caring, through him, and who are in the midst of evils of which they are warned here. There could not but be the foresight of such things, and provision made for them, in the love that manifests itself towards all the people of God to the last generation.

2. He proceeds at once, therefore, to bid us, as having received Christ Jesus the Lord, to walk in Him. The place of identification with Him which God has given us is to be carried out in practice here. We are to walk as identified with Him. We are to walk as in this new place and new creation, separated, therefore, from the world and under the authority, as Lord, of Him whom the world has rejected. We have received Him as our Lord, not simply as our Saviour, although these two things will necessarily go together; but we have received Him as One who has rightful title over us and One in whom we have found all that enables us to be independent of the world around. Thus we are rooted and built up in Him. It is from Him that we draw subsistence as the plant through its root, and we are thus built up in Him as the plant builds it-

3 (ii. 9-15): Quickened and risen with Him.

3. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead [l]bodily, and in him ye are filled [m]up; who is the head of all principality and [n]authority; in whom also ye were circumcised with the circumcision not done with the [o]hand, in putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of [p]Christ; buried with him in [q]baptism,

[l] ch. 1. 19.
[m] Eph. 3. 19.
[n] ch. 1. 16
[o] Rom. 2. 29. Eph. 2. 11.
[p] Gal. 5. 24
[q] Rom. 6. 4.

self up through the nourishment which it thus receives. How perfectly then are we provided! Christ is our one Sufficiency; and "the faith" is that which has, so to speak, given us Christ Himself, for it is by faith that we know Him. We are to abound in it, says the apostle, with thanksgiving,—an immense point, for if our hearts are not making joy over the truth which God has given us, what shall we have to keep us from the evil around? or to produce in us the fruits which are acceptable to God? Here he adds one of his warnings, not to be led away, therefore, through philosophy and vain deceit; that is, through the working of man's mind apart from revelation. Christ is the subject of revelation, plainly. No human thought could have discovered Him: none can add to Him. All mere human teaching has upon it the essential marks of the world itself, a world into which He came in love, but which had no heart for Him.

3. Thus we are shut up to Christ, who is indeed, as has been declared, the Centre and Reason of the universe. The knowledge of Him is, therefore, the only key to the right apprehension of all things. These are the manifestations, each in its measure, of God; and Christ it is in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. That word, "bodily," makes Him our own. He has come out from the invisible to be among us; and not simply for display: He has pledged Himself to service in it, whatever the need may be, as when He showed them His hands and His side. And still "we are complete"—filled full "in Him," who is—notice how these things are brought together—"Head of all principality and power." To Him the circumstances of the way are absolutely obedient. Here we have the perfect ministry to us, therefore, of everything around us, as well as the perfect means of apprehension of it all, as knowing Him. The apostle goes on now to show us how thoroughly we have been cut off from other things. If the Jew was separated from the nations by the fact of his circumcision, we, he says, have been circumcised, not with that circumcision indeed, not by something with the hand, but by something infinitely more and deeper, "the putting off of the body of the flesh," the flesh in its totality, "by the circumcision of Christ," that is, by the Christian circumcision. His cross has accomplished this for us. We are privileged to turn away from all that we find thus in ourselves, to give up self in fact altogether, as having any confidence in it, as the apostle tells us in Philippians: "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Notice that there is nothing there of self to have confidence in. It is Christ in whom we boast or glory, and that in contrast with all fleshly confidence whatever.

Slow we may be, indeed, to realize that every atom of self-confidence *is* confidence in the flesh. We would fain draw a distinction. We would say that there is a Christian self; that, after all, there must be something in us which is the fruit of God's work; but the cross has not set aside self in one fashion to allow it to be brought forward again in another. If we build again the things which we destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors in this sense also, and the apostle adds here what is the complete assertion of this: "We are *buried* with Him," he says, "in baptism." God has privileged us, thus, to put away ourselves as completely as a dead man is put away amongst the dead when he is buried.

This truth as to baptism is one of those which we derive from Romans, but we are "raised up" also, he adds; and here it is important to get clearly what the apostle really says. The common version makes it to be baptism in which

in whom * ye have been also raised [r]together through faith in the operation of God who raised him from among the [s]dead. And you, being dead in offences and the uncircumcision of your [t]flesh, hath he quickened together with [u]him, having forgiven us all [v]trespasses; having blotted out the obligation in ordinances that was against [w]us, which was contrary to us; and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the [x]cross; having spoiled principalities and authorities, he made a show of them openly, leading them in triumph by [y]it.

[r] Eph. 2. 6.
[s] Rom. 4.24.
[t] Eph 2. 1.
[u] Eph. 2. 5.
[v] *cf.* Rom. 5. 18.
[w] Gal. 3. 10.
[x] Eph. 2.15.
[y] Ps. 68. 18. Eph. 4. 8.

* "Wherein" is equally possible in the Greek.

also we are raised up, but what is connected with this makes it impossible to accept it. We are "raised up with Him," he says, "*through the faith* of the operation of God who raised Him from among the dead." We are not raised up then in an ordinance, but "through faith." The "wherein" may be, and should surely be "in whom;" and we cannot simply take this as what baptism typifies for us, because the moment we speak of type, it does not require faith to make a type to be such. We could not be raised up *typically* by faith. One could not say a type was a type through faith. Baptism in itself speaks of immersion, burial. The word would not convey that of resurrection. The force of the baptism is in the burial and nothing else. The resurrection which is to follow is in Christ and from Him alone.

It is thus that we are set free from the thought of deliverance by an ordinance, which so many hold to-day. We are "raised up through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from among the dead." Here we see distinctly what is meant. Resurrection is the opposite of burial. In burial a dead man is put among the dead. In resurrection a now living man is given his place among the living; and it is seen that Christ identified with us through grace in His death has been raised up of God; that we might find, therefore, our own title and ability to take our place amongst those truly alive. But then all depends upon this identification of ourselves with Him. Our eyes are now, therefore, to be upon Christ. He is in this character our true self; and our confidence, therefore, is to be in Him. As we have had it in Galatians, we live, yet no more we, but Christ liveth in us. It is the One who is before God for us who is before us now in faith and whom we accept as now our true self, a self in whom we can have confidence, a self that we can contemplate with joy and satisfaction, and without the least tendency to such pride of heart as results naturally from what we call self-occupation. Here is One who will draw us away from self, who will, as a heavenly Object draw us completely out of the world, and accomplish our deliverance in both senses at the same time.

But he has another side now to present to us; and here we touch Ephesian truth, as before, that of Romans. "You," he says, "being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh," not as living then, but as dead for God, having absolutely nothing that He could accept, nothing that is towards Him in your natural condition, "He has quickened together with Him." Here is a change of condition as well as the change of position spoken of before. We have got life, a new life, a life which has come to us through Christ's death, and which is the result of divine power working towards us in Him.

With this, therefore, we have the forgiveness of all offences. Nothing could be allowed to mar the perfection of that work for us or of its fruit in us. There could be no quickening without forgiveness, as its necessary accompaniment. As a consequence, therefore, the "hand-writing in ordinances" which stood against us, which was contrary to us, He has taken out of the way. It is not the law itself of which he is speaking, but of our *obligation to it*. This is what the "hand-writing" means, and this is what is effaced for us, it being nailed to the

4 (ii. 16–23): The warning to hold the Head and not be subject to ordinances.

4. Let no one, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or [z]sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of [a]Christ. Let no one rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshiping of [b]angels, entering into things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding fast the [c]head, from whom all the body ministered to and united together by joints and bands increaseth with the increase of [d]God. If ye have died with Christ from the elements of the [e]world, why, as if alive in the world, do ye subject yourselves to [f]ordinances: handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using) after the injunctions and doctrines of [g]men? things which have indeed an appearance of wisdom in will worship and humility and severity as to the [h]body, (not in a certain [i]honor,) to the satisfaction of the [j]flesh.

z Rom.14.3.
a Heb. 8. 5.
b Heb. 1.14.
c *cf.* Eph. 4. 15.
d Eph. 4.16.
e Gal. 6. 14.
f Gal. 4. 3, 9, 10.
g Matt.15.9.
h *cf.*1 Cor.9. 27.
i 1 Cor. 6.19.
j Phil. 3.3,4.

cross. The law is not dead, as we have seen in Romans, but we have died to it. It is stated here in another way, but the same thing in effect. With this power of condemnation cancelled for us, authorities and powers, (all the power of Satan which could work in sinful men,) are also set aside. Christ has made a show of them openly, leading captivity captive, triumphing over them by His cross.

4. The apostle warns them now that they must hold fast the Head, and for this give up the ordinances of the law and all else which would prevent their drawing absolutely out of the fulness which they had in Christ. No one was to be judged with regard to meat or drink, feasts, new moons or sabbaths. All these things necessarily went with the obligation to ordinances. They were in themselves simply a shadow of the things to come. The body, that is, the substance of them, was in Christ. Christians were not to do their own will in that which looked indeed like humility, as in the worship of angels, but which was, after all, an intrusion into things unseen, and the result of pride instead of humility, while it forfeited the blessing which was to be enjoyed alone through Christ; from whom all the body ministered to and joined together by joints and bands increases with the increase of God. Christians are themselves to be as Christ Himself was, like "a root out of a dry ground," maintained by sustenance from heaven, divine sustenance alone, as he says here. They have died with Christ out of the world and therefore out of that which belongs to it. To subject themselves to ordinances, was to take a position contradictory of this. Like the legal institutions themselves, they could only deal with things from the outside, prohibit touch and taste and what not, things which appear, as we know, wise enough, but which ignore altogether that which is God's only remedy for the evil in man, which is a new creation. Such will-worship will indeed always have an appearance of wisdom and of humility too; and an ascetic treatment of the body will be held as a proof of zeal and devotedness. God has no pleasure in such things. The body, indwelt of the Holy Spirit, is to be held on that account in a certain honor, while the pride of man could be satisfied with that which, if it disregarded the body, built up the flesh.

Div. 4.

Sec. 1.

We have now the practical consequences, not negatively merely, in the refusal of certain things, but in that which is morally right and fitting, the image of Christ wrought out in the life.

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. iii., iv.)

Practical consequences.

Section 1. (Chap. iii. 1-17.)

Christ all.

1 (iii. 1-4): A life hid with Christ in God.

1. IF then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where [k]Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the [l]earth; for ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in [m]God. When Christ [our] * life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with him in [n]glory.

2 (iii. 5-11): Exchange of the old man for the new.

2. Hold † mortified, therefore, your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is [o]idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience;‡ in the which ye also once walked when ye lived in these [p]things. But now also have ‡ put off all these things, wrath, anger, malice, injurious speaking, shameful language out of your mouth: lie not one

k ch. 1. 11. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

l Phil. 3. 19, 20.

m *cf.* 1 John 3. 1, 2.

n Matt. 13. 43. 2 Thess. 1. 10.

o Rom. 8. 13, 12, 1.

p 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.

* Many MSS. read "your." † An aorist imperative: not be doing it, but let it be as done. ‡ Editors generally omit "upon the sons of disobedience," but the MS. authority is abundant. ‡ Another aorist imperative.

1. The consequence of being raised with Christ is to put us necessarily outside the world. The risen man is in connection with heaven, although, as with the Lord during the forty days, he may actually be upon earth, but as raised with Christ, in association with Him, the things above belong to him where Christ sits at the right hand of God. What is according to God is seen by this place of exaltation in which Christ is. God has bidden us, in this way, to have our hearts in company with His heart; and Christ, the accepted of God is the rejected of man. Thus, a heavenly Object lifts one from the earth. It is not a question simply or what is in itself evil or what is not. Christ has passed out of the whole scene. He is in heaven, and the heart drawn there is God's method of sanctification, therefore, for the soul. The result is that if a true life for God is lived here upon the earth, yet it is in character, in all that in which it has its source and object, a life hidden from the world. Christ is hidden, and hidden in God. As a consequence, to be understood by the world, to be commended and honored, would be contrary to that association with Christ which God has given us. The day is coming when Christ will be manifested, He who is our life even now. Then indeed that for which the Christian has lived will become apparent to all, and the wisdom of his life will be evident. Then we will be manifested with Him in glory, but for this, therefore, faith must be content to wait through all the present time, finding in Him its present joy and satisfaction, but in strangership here. This is the principle which underlies the whole moral condition for us.

2. The result is that we are to put to death our members which are upon the earth. He does not say our bodies. The body is to be offered up to God "a living sacrifice." The members are quite other morally than this implies, as he shows here. If the body is allowed to have a life, then, it is to be put to death; but he will not allow that this is properly the *body*. He speaks of it as if the members, so to speak, were in revolt from the body, in revolt certainly from subjection to God. On account of such things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. You walked in those things, he says, when you lived in them, but the walk must follow, there-

to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his [q]doings, and have put on the new * man which is being renewed * into knowledge after the image of him that created [r]him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, but Christ is all and in [s]all.

3 (iii.12-17): The manifestation of Christ in His people.

3. Have † put on, therefore, as the elect of [t]God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as [Christ] ‡ forgave you, so also do [u]ye. And over all these things [put on] love which is

q Eph. 4. 22, 25.
r Eph. 4. 24.
s 2 Cor. 5.16, 17.
t 1 Thess. 1. 4.
u Eph. 4.31, 32.

* The new man (*νέον*); renewed (*ἀνακαινούμενον*).
† Aorist imperative. ‡ The weight of MS. authority is for "the Lord."

fore, the character of the life. What a disgrace to walk in things in which we do not live!

There are other things to be put off, things which have not the same character of lust, but which, nevertheless, are contrary to God. We are not to lie to one another, as having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new. This has introduced us, as he says, now, into a new scene. The new man has a knowledge which is derived from faith. It is the knowledge of a new creation where there is nothing but Christ. No human distinctions are recognized in it, no conditions upon which men pride themselves here. Christ is everything and Christ is in all who belong to that place. Here, as we have seen, is that which keeps the heart. We can only be strangers to that which we have been brought out of by being at home in that which is now made ours. We cannot set ourselves right piecemeal. We can only be set right by having our hearts in that, where Christ being all, all is according to God, and where we can let our hearts out freely; where we can covet everything, and nothing will be denied us.

3. The joy of the Lord is our strength. For mortification, we want power; and our power is found in that which lifts us out of the whole scene to which evil attaches. Christ, therefore, is now to give character to every part of our behaviour. As the elect of God, those who owe everything to His will, His choice as those set apart to Him, and those upon whom He has set His love, we are to put on the things which properly accompany this: "bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." It is striking how, in all these, there is found some form of self-denial. Power is shown by competence for stooping; God turning also the very things that are against us into the means of educating us in this. Things evil in themselves may, nevertheless, furnish us with a wholesome discipline for the way and enable us, in answer, to bring forth fruit which is according to God. We are to forbear as God has forborne. We are to forgive as Christ has forgiven us; to all which is to be added love, as that which is the "bond of perfectness," which keeps everything in its place and perfects every detail of life. Think how the world, even, has to put on the appearance of love, the more if it has not the reality; but love itself has no need to put on an appearance. It will manifest itself in harmony in every tone and gesture. The manifestation of the divine nature has a unity in it which makes everything to be in harmony. If there is love in the heart, the words will not be hard or unseemly; their very tone will be affected.

Here too, the peace of Christ is found, that is to preside in the heart. It is the peace which results from unbroken communion, in a life that is according to God, in ways that are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. To this we have been called in one body. This peace is the common heritage of all the

the bond of [v]perfectness. And let the peace of Christ* preside in your [w]hearts, to which also ye have been called in one [x]body, and be [y]thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to [z]God.† And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God‡ the Father by [a]him.

[v] 1 Pet. 4. 8.
[w] Jno. 14. 27.
[x] Eph. 2. 13–16.
[y] Phil. 4. 6.
[z] Eph. 5. 19.
[a] Eph. 5. 20.

* Some MSS. read, "God." † Some read, "the Lord."
‡ Many insert, "and."

saints of God; and we may well be thankful as we realize the immensity of such a blessing as this. The word of Christ, too, is to dwell in us richly. All through, it is Christ here; the forgiveness of Christ, the peace of Christ, the word of Christ. We can see how occupation with Christ is that which is necessarily the basis of it all, and His Lordship is fully owned. Thus, the word of Christ is not only owned and bowed to, but dwells in the soul richly in all its fulness and blessedness; and this issues in an ability to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. The truth which God has given, if it be really received, cannot be held simply as one's own. We cannot but impart it. Truth that is not imparted can scarcely be enjoyed, and in the close contact in which God has brought us with one another, the interest that He has given us in each other, the relationship we bear to one another, it cannot but follow that we shall realize one another's needs. Connected with this, the power of it all in our own hearts is beautifully shown us. "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," the truth makes music in us. We sing with grace in our hearts to God, and what a need there is for this, in order to any true teaching or admonishing one another. Nay, will not this enjoyment in our own souls be the most effectual form of it? Such heart-songs will awaken other songs, and in all this, he says, whatever is done, in word or deed, we are to do all things as representatives of the Lord Jesus, in His Name. How much this would settle for us as to details of practical conduct, if it were only frankly accepted by us all! In word and in deed, identification with Christ in His spirit is to mark us, and here again, as those who are giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. How we see that the spirit of joy and praise is that which becomes us, the atmosphere of heaven to which our life belongs. Here, then, is a beautiful and comprehensive picture of the Christian life in its moral aspect. We are to learn it in His company, or we shall never learn it.

Sec. 2.

We have had the character of the new man put before us with a completeness which might make us think that the whole range of Christian duty was contained in it. What are we called to recognize or "put on," but this new man?

But the new man is the man in Christ, and the place in Christ takes one outside of human distinctions; for "in Christ there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28). And thus the most fundamental natural distinction seems to be set aside.

We have, however, to learn that Scripture is larger than our thoughts, and that the God of creation is that of redemption also. As long, therefore, as we are in the unchanged body of the old creation, we are subject to the ordinances which He has made for it. Doubtless also, there are higher purposes to be worked out in this way; but our point is now, the steadfast way in which God maintains His own thoughts, and will have us maintain and honor them. Husbands, wives, parents, children, are thus natural relationships established of God, and honorable in all, as the apostle says of marriage (Heb. xiii. 4).

SECTION 2. (Chaps. iii. 18–iv. 6.)
The Relationships of life.

1 (iii.18-21): By creation ordinance.

1. WIVES, submit yourselves to your husbands as is fitting in the [b] Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against [c] them. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing in the [d] Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children [to anger],* that they be not [e] discouraged.

2 (iii.22-iv. 1): Results of sin.

2. Bond-servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service † as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the [f] Lord. Whatsoever ye do, work heartily as unto the Lord and not to men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; ye serve the Lord Christ. For he that doeth wrong shall receive again the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons. Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in [g] heaven.

[b] Eph. 5.22. 1 Pet. 3. 1.
[c] Eph. 5. 25.
[d] Eph. 6. 1.
[e] Eph. 6. 4.
[f] Eph. 6. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 18.
[g] Eph. 6 9.

* There are good MSS. which omit, "to anger."
† Some MSS. have "services."

But there are other relations here which are not established of God, but have come in through sin, as that of master and slave: here one might expect that there could be nothing but (as among Christians at least) the prohibition absolutely of such. This is a matter important enough to be in effect (though not formally) the subject of a distinct epistle, which finds place as supplementary to this; we shall examine it, therefore, in that connection. Here, however, we see that the slave or bondman is addressed as such, and (what is more to the purpose) the master also.

After this there is insisted on the duty to those who are without, outside of Christian claim, but not of the all-embracing love which in Christ came after the lost,—a love to which we owe our every blessing also, who were all once outside, and among the lost. In this review of relationships, therefore, the apostle will not omit one that is so real as this, however different from, and indeed in contrast with all others.

1. Relationships ordained by the Creator come here first, and are indeed the shadow of higher and spiritual ones. This, however, which Ephesians develops so fully as to marriage, is not in any way referred to here. We have but brief exhortations, which are for the most part repetitions of those in Ephesians; we shall not do more, therefore, than point out how these repetitions emphasize what is the main responsibility in each case. Those who are in authority are to exercise it in love—a love that seeketh not its own; while it is for those under authority to yield obedience as to the Lord: a thing which gives it at once a needed guard from any weak sufferance of evil, while making the hardest task that in which "thy God hath commanded thy strength;" so that *His* strength may be reckoned on for its accomplishment.

2. This principle is carried out in application to the poor slave, who is now Christ's servant, and thus truly free. If the Lord has appointed him a lowly and trying service, it will not be counted a dishonor to him in the day of final recompense, when servant and master will stand before their common Master, to receive, not according to the place they may have filled, but according to the faithfulness with which they have filled it. The Master then will be One who has filled Himself the very lowest place to serve us all.

3. This naturally leads on to what in this day and world is truest service,

3 (iv. 2-4): The manifestation of the mystery of Christ.

3. Continue steadfastly in [h]prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; at the same time praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest as I ought to [i]speak.

4 (iv. 5,6): Conduct towards the world.

4. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the [j]opportunity. Let your word be alway with [k]grace, seasoned with [l]salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

h Eph. 6.18. 1 Thess. 5. 17.

i Eph. 6. 19, 20.

j Eph. 5. 15, 16.

k Eccle. 10. 12.

l Mk. 9. 50.

SECTION 3. (7–18.)

Openings of heart.

ALL my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord; whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state* and that he may comfort your [m]hearts; with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of [n]you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here.

Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, saluteth [o]you, and Marcus the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received orders, if he come unto you, receive [p]him) and Jesus, who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision:

m Eph.6.21.

n Phile. 10.

o Acts 19.29.

p 2 Tim. 4. 11.

* Some read, "that he may know your state."

and as to which Paul had a special commission, the manifestation of the mystery of Christ, against which all the world is, and he who is the usurping "prince of this world;" so that, if it is to have way, God must open a door for it. For this, therefore, the apostle seeks the prayers of the disciples, and in general that they persevere in prayer, watching, as in expectation of answer, and with thanksgiving, which implies the tender and encouraging remembrance of abundant mercy. But indeed the very fact of having such a gospel to pray for may well be the greatest encouragement: how could He, who at such a cost has provided salvation, fail to answer the desire of heart which is so completely in sympathy with His own heart? Here is that as to which we may pray therefore with boldness and confident expectation; and here is the secret of confidence, when we have learned to identify ourselves with Christ's interests upon the earth as our real concern. With Paul himself there certainly was no other, as we well know.

4. Finally, apart from the direct preaching of the gospel, we are to "walk in wisdom towards those that are without, redeeming opportunities:" for in a world under Satan's power there will not be always such. For this reason one must be ready when the time comes. At all times, also, the speech is to be characterized by grace, the "salt" of divine holiness preserving this from passing over into mere laxity and inability to stand for God. This in fact alone is grace; but the holiness of grace is as far as possible from that of law, though law is holy. A Christian, as one who owes all to grace, falsifies his testimony if he shows a spirit of legality; nor will there be wisdom found in this way to "answer," or meet according to their need, the various conditions of those around. We must be in the spirit of Christ (which grace is) in order to do His work.

Sec. 3.

Perhaps one may best characterize the closing section of Colossians as "heart-openings." It is in fact the free interchange of brotherly feeling on the part of

these only are my fellow-workers for the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort unto me. [q]Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving earnestly for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he laboreth much* for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, saluteth [r]you, and [s]Demas. Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the assembly that is in his [t]house. And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause it to be read also in the assembly of the Laodiceans, and that ye also read that from Laodicea. And say to [u]Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me [v]Paul; remember my bonds. Grace be with you.†

q Phile. 23.
r 2 Tim. 4. 11.
s 2 Tim. 4. 10.
t Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16. 19.
u Phile. 2.
v 1 Cor. 16. 21. 2 Thess. 3. 17. cf. Gal. 6. 11.

* Some, "hath much zeal." † Some add, "Amen."

those who have recognized the place which they have been given with regard to one another. Thus it begins with the provision for mutual knowledge of each other's state. Tychicus, a beloved and faithful brother, able to enter into such things, is sent from the apostle to convey to the disciples the news as to himself; and to bring back from them the account of their condition. This he realizes as what their hearts would crave for comfort, as united together in the love of Christ.

There follow special greetings and remembrances; as to which there is scarcely much needed by way of explanation, though much may be gained by meditation. The apostle closes with the salutation written with his own hand, certifying the letter to be his own, and bidding them keep in mind his bonds for Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

PAUL, a prisoner of Christ [a]Jesus, and Timotheus the brother, unto Philemon the beloved and our [b]fellow-laborer, and to the sister Apphia, and to [c]Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the assembly in thy [d]house: grace be to you and peace, from God our Father and the [e]Lord Jesus Christ.

a ver. 9. Eph. 3. 1. Eph. 4. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 8.
b Phil. 2. 25.
c Col. 4. 17.
d Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16 19.
e Eph. 1. 2.

NOTES.

THE epistle to Philemon is plainly an appendix to that to the Colossians, as before noticed. It was written at the same time, sent to the same place, and by the hands of one of those entrusted with the former one, with whom it has to do. As an address to a master, it naturally connects with Colossians and its kindred epistle Ephesians, the only two of Paul's epistles in which masters, as such, are addressed. Here the case of Onesimus incidentally brings before us that of slavery as seen in the light of Christianity; and this seems the real subject of the epistle. That it is not openly treated as such has its evident reason. There is no legislation as to it; but the principles that are, in fact, maintained are only wider in application, declaring, as they do, the relation of Christianity and its disciples to the world-status, in a way which touches much more than a question which, for most of us now, has ceased to be of personal concern.

The purport of the epistle is almost, one might say, to undo what the writer is doing, in returning a runaway slave, now converted, to the hands of his master, himself a Christian. What were these, then, now to one another? *Brethren*, as the apostle plainly says (ver. 16). He and the assembly which had received Onesimus had not waited for the expression of Philemon's mind before acting in the matter. Manifestly it was for God alone to bring in among His people: the baptism of the Spirit alone could make a member of the Body of Christ. When that was done, it was too late for man's interference. Thus the apostle in the previous epistle introduces Onesimus to the whole assembly as a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you; and associates him with Tychicus as bearer of tidings to them. They could not but receive whom the Lord had received, and own the apostle's messenger as one certified to them with the full weight of his authority.

Of this assembly Philemon formed a part; and thus stood committed to the reception of his slave, or to the rejection of those who had received him. There was, in fact, no thought of any dissent; there could be none without the overthrow of an order which was divine, not human; and it is with his place settled as to the assembly that Onesimus turns to meet his master, with the letter of Paul in his hand.

Yet here, it is plain, it is not to meet him, as in the assembly, upon equal terms. Distinctly is it recognized by the apostle that, (although not in the assembly,) the relation of master and slave still remained. Yet this must, of course, be made to accept whatever modification the common Christianity imposed upon it. The eternal must give law to the earthly and the temporal. But how, then, could the badge of slavery abide at all? To answer this is to answer many other questions growing out of or connected with it, relating to the practical life, and with regard to the world side of a Christianity that is not of the world.

I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my [f]prayers, hearing of thy love and [g]faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and unto all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledgment of every good thing that is in you * toward Christ Jesus. For I had great joy † and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints have been refreshed by [h]thee, brother.

[f] Eph. 1. 16. 1 Thess. 1. 2. 2 Thess. 1. 3.
[g] Eph. 1. 15. Col. 1. 4.
[h] ver. 20.

* Some read, "us." † Some read, "thankfulness."

But here it is well to point out once more a source of confusion in our common version in the frequent want of proper discrimination between two words which it alike translates "world," but which are in different lines of thought really. *Kosmos* is the world physically, whether of people or things; while *aion* has to do with time, and means "age"—a certain defined and limited period of the world's history. There are past ages, a present age, and ages still to come; through all of which the kosmos passes; under whatever different phases, the same kosmos still.

The present age has one terrible characteristic. The former ones were all defined by God's various dealing with men; and that for blessing to them. He had not then, even for the time (as for a time alone it could be) given up the world. Thus the age of promise and of law alike contemplated blessing on the earth, and therefore the blessing of the earth; but at the present time God is simply taking out from the earth a people designed for heavenly blessing. This is indeed on His part a more wonderful work of grace than ever was before, but for the world it is a diversion from the divine ways which were leading on to blessing. The throne of God which was on earth in Israel, and the more glorious presence which since greeted it, are alike gone; and the way and cause of this, from the human side, give character to this time of His departure, which is the time of His rejection.

One may say, however, that this must not be so taken as to ignore the coming of the Spirit to represent Christ upon earth, and that the house of God in its spiritual reality is here also. This is true; and we may say again with regard to these things, that they express a more wonderful working of divine grace than ever was seen before. But notice that the *world* does not see this. Nothing is visible to human eyes any more; and "the world seeth Me no more" is Christ's acceptance of rejection by it, and the seal, therefore, of its condemnation. The gospel goes out world-wide among men; but that changes in no wise anything of this. And though it can be said that "God so loved the world as to give His Only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life," yet, that we might be delivered from the *aion*—this "present evil world," or "age" (Gal. i. 4)—Christ gave Himself according to the will of our God and Father.

In the world therefore of this "age," (an age whose end will only be when Christ appears in judgment upon what will then be in ripest, fullest rebellion against Him,) the Christian can be but a stranger; and thus Scripture ever contemplates him.

This, of course, cannot alter his relation to God as the Creator, upon which Scripture equally insists; nor does it affect that moral government of things which God necessarily exercises, or He would not be God. It is this that makes us bow to the authority of those who, like the Nero of Paul's day, may be wholly set against Him. We recognize the mercy which acts, even through such as these, to restrain worse evil, and by a government of man by man, which was God's own institution after the flood. Spite of the disorder, therefore, we own God's order, and submit ourselves to His government, which we are sure is a wise and holy one, though faith is needed to realize this.

Wherefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to enjoin upon thee what is [i]meet, yet for love's sake I beseech rather, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of [j]Jesus Christ,—I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, [k]Onesimus, who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me: whom I have sent again to thee: do thou, therefore, receive him, that is, mine own bowels. Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel; but without thy mind would I do nothing,

[i] ver. 19.
[j] ver. 1.
[k] Col. 4. 9.

The character of the age has not been changed by the Christianity that is in it; and the apostle declares (none more conscious, surely, of the immensity of the blessing) that Satan is its god. "The god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4) is a terrible indictment indeed, after Christ has come, His work accomplished, and the Spirit here upon earth; but there it stands, and cannot be erased: we cannot alter it, but are delivered from it.

Slavery is the fruit of a world estranged from God. It is a sample of what sin has wrought, not to be imagined in a paradisaic earth, and in its whole spirit opposed to the free and equal spirit of Christianity. When these things meet, the antagonism might be expected to be sharply pronounced; and while it could not legislate for the world, or deliver its disciples from an oppressive yoke under which they might be born, yet one might expect the Church to purge itself absolutely from an incongruous practice such as this.

Yet we have already seen, both in Ephesians and Colossians, masters addressed as such, without even a reproof for what they were. Simply they were to give unto their bondservants that which was just and equal; while their Christian bondmen were (as we read in the first epistle to Timothy,) not to despise their believing masters because they were brethren, but rather to do them service as faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit (chap. vi. 2). Such an admonition may well be thought to show that among Christians the severity of these bonds was greatly slackened; but it shows still more plainly that they were not annulled.

Was this then all that Christianity had to say? It was a large and pressing question. The number of slaves in the empire was immense; the miseries resulting were excessive; in the judgment of the haughty Roman the new religion suited well this class of the oppressed and downtrodden, who in fact soon largely sought to it. Here another Master was found, with truest liberty for the slave, even while the old service might continue. And under the heathen master it did continue, for the cross was the symbol of the world's present sway, and the faithful unto death were they whom the crown waited.

It was another matter, however, where Christianity had won master as well as slave; and here, where it was mistress of all the conditions, were the relations caused by sin, and embodying so different a spirit still to continue? To such questions, Philemon, as a supplement to its connected epistles, yields the answer furnished by the New Testament.

Philemon means "friendly, loving," and it is in this character that Paul appeals to him. The Christian heart is what must decide in the matter before him; and Paul's comfort is the assurance that Philemon, the "friendly," or "kind-hearted," answers to his name. It was faith that wrought in this love, and gave it its Christian verity, and found therefore in the saints its special objects. This naturally introduces what is on the writer's heart; for the formerly unprofitable Onesimus is now one of these saints of God, who as such has a claim upon Philemon that will not be denied.

Confident, therefore, in his readiness of heart, the apostle will not insist upon

that thy benefit should not be as it were of [l]necessity, but willingly. For perhaps for this reason he departed from thee for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever; not now as a bond-servant, but above a bond-servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If thou countest me then a [m]partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on my account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it; though I say not unto thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my [n]bowels in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say.

[l] 2 Cor. 9. 7.

[m] 2 Cor. 8. 23.

[n] ver. 7.

any apostolic authority, but pleads for Onesimus as for a child of his own, spiritually, begotten too in his bonds, a solace given to him of God, who was now Paul the aged, and the prisoner of Jesus Christ. How many motives here to compel a free heart's obedience! Doubtless Onesimus had been an unprofitable servant, yet now he was profitable as a Christian, ready to do service to Philemon, as he had already done to the apostle, to whom he had endeared himself so much as to make him as his own bowels. Yet he was sending him away who might have performed the service for him that Philemon doubtless would have rendered had he been at Rome. He might well have been glad, therefore, to have such a representative in his place; and it would have been a thing most acceptable to the aged prisoner. He would indeed have retained him, but would not assume what was Philemon's mind, nor appear to force what should be freest action. Had not God, moreover, overruled the temporary departure of a slave to bestow upon Philemon in his place the far greater gift of a brother beloved? Let him receive him then as such, nay, as if it were the apostle himself; who would take upon himself also all the responsibility of any loss that he had sustained. Yet to the apostle Philemon owed a larger debt, even himself as a Christian,—a self to which his former one was of no value. As a brother then to a brother, and with all brotherly confidence, Paul appeals to him to give him joy in the Lord, satisfying the longings of a heart taught and enlarged by divine love itself.

This is the substance of the epistle; and at first sight it disappoints our expectations as the last word upon such a subject. There is no direct doctrine in it; there is no decree that Christians should set free their slaves; no appeal even to the heart of one who so clearly has a heart as Philemon has, to do so. The claim of the master is recognized, an escaped slave in the liberty of Christ is sent back to whence he had fled. It is clear that Christianity holds out no worldly inducements to its disciples,—is not to serve as a leverage to lift a believer above his position when called by divine grace. Ambition will not here be gratified, nor ease be served; but rather the scandal of the cross added to all other burdens: this, while the blessing of liberty is not denied; and if "thou mayst be made free, use it rather." But no worldly motive is to take rank with or supplement the spiritual: the misery of which has been seen abundantly from even those early days till now.

And yet it could be said, "Not now a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved;" and in the family of God, where none serve except the free-born children, none are bondmen but in the love of Christ. How such principles would work out in practice, we may easily conceive. Slave and brother must reveal themselves in inevitable contradiction; the Church, too, which knows only members of Christ's body, being set in charge to maintain needed

But withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given unto [o]you.

Epaphras saluteth [p]thee, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; [q]Marcus, [r]Aristarchus, [s]Demas, [t]Luke, my fellow-laborers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

* Some omit.

[o] Phil. 1. 25. Phil. 2. 24.
[p] Col. 1. 7. Col. 4. 12.
[q] Col. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 11.
[r] Acts 19. 29. Col. 4. 10.
[s] Col. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 10.
[t] Col. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 11.

discipline, that these principles might be kept from violation. In the assembly the slave had equal right and voice; and it was likely that he would be at least as fully represented as the master.

Thus though there might be no immediate change, or imperative proclamation of release to the bondman, a spirit had entered with Christianity which was really much more than this. A new life was swelling the buds of a spiritual growth which should snap every bond that would constrict it. The life of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, might be safely trusted to do this.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF PHILIPPIANS

THE epistle to the Philippians, coming in the fifth place of this series, is the Deuteronomy of the whole; that is, it gives us the practical result, not simply of a position in Christ, but of the apprehension of it and of Him, therefore, with whom it fills the soul. We have seen that in Colossians, the result of the apprehension of the position is Christ Himself known and nothing else, the knowledge of the new man. It is evident that in the third chapter here, we have precisely the moral result of this, Christ the one Object for the heart. The very name here, Philippians, agrees with this. "Philippians" means "fond of horses." of the race-course. as we may say, and the third of Philippians is just the Christian race, with Christ as the goal and prize of it.

The steps by which full Christian position is attained are not found here. We have simply the result. Thus, at the beginning of the third chapter, the true circumcision are those who "worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh;" but this "no confidence in the flesh" is just one side of the deliverance of the eighth of Romans. This, of course, is absolutely needed for such a race as we read of there. Confidence in the flesh, the flesh in the Christian as well as any other, would only be an absolute prohibition of such a course as the apostle speaks of there. We cannot carry the flesh with us upon such a journey. The very first chapter here, which gives Christ as the governing principle of the life, is also in necessary connection with this, while the second chapter traces His course as the pattern for the Christian. It is, therefore, as in Colossians, Christ all through, closing with the triumphant realization as learned by experience, of the competency for all circumstances thus acquired. Philippians is evidently Colossians, with just this one thing added, the actual experience which must be known in order to have the full result such as we have it here. The unity of subject makes the epistle practically a very simple one in its construction.

The divisions are:

1. (Chap. i.): Christ as the governing principle of the Christian life.
2. (Chap. ii.): Christ in His self-humiliation the pattern for us.
3. (Chap. iii.): Christ in glory the Object before the soul, the goal and prize of the race.
4. (Chap. iv.): Christ as known by experience in His competence for all the circumstances of the way.

THE EPISTLE TO THE
PHILIPPIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

Christ, the governing principle of the Christian life.

1(1-11): Shown in the constancy of the Philippians.
1 (1, 2): The order established for this.

1. [1] PAUL and [a]Timotheus, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ [b]Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:* grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[a] Col. 1. 1.
[b] 1 Cor. 1. 2.

* Or, "ministers."

NOTES.

Div. 1.

To REACH the end that we have here, we must begin aright. Christ as the governing principle of the life is the starting point in the Christian race, and the necessary condition of the final result: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It would be altogether wrong to suppose that every Christian can say this. It is open to him, surely; but as practical attainment, how far often from being reached! The result here is found only by the man to whom Christ is the governing principle of his life, the pattern of his way, and the Object for his heart. We must put these things together or we misplace the truth. It is a truth of experience; and experience alone can give it to us. Thus here, we have something more indeed than Christ being our life. It is rather the result which the epistle to the Galatians gives us, of Christ living in one. Christ our life is the necessary basis-truth; but Christ living in us is the actual power for the life,—Christ objectively present to the soul, governing it entirely: "To me to live is Christ;" and notice how this clears the sight as to all the way itself. The apostle is able to decide, as it were, whether he shall live or die, by these interests of Christ which govern him. He longs to depart and be with Christ, but he sees that his remaining in the flesh is necessary for Christ's interests, for the sake of His people, and thus he knows he shall remain and abide with them all. How thoroughly will a principle like this clear the sight as to all details! It is, in fact, the single eye; and if the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. It is the practical result of the exhortation in Colossians, to do whatever we do, in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus; that is, as representing Him upon the earth. Thus, then, we start in the epistle before us.

1. The epistle begins with the state of the Philippians themselves. He is exceedingly happy about them. There has been with them an abiding fellowship with the gospel, that is, with the interests of Christ on earth, which has given them a necessary participation with the apostle in that defence and confirmation of the gospel which was entrusted to him. Here he finds the strongest encouragement to believe in their steady progress.

[1] He associates with himself Timothy, as together bond-servants of Jesus Christ. We know that this bond-service is the height of liberty,—that it is the language which love uses in the realization of the love which has sought us and gained us for God. He does not speak as an apostle here: he is a saint amongst other saints. The experience which we find in the epistle is plainly not to be thought

2 (3-8). Their fellowship in the gospel.

2 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you,
always in every supplication making supplication for
you all with [c]joy, because of your fellowship with the
gospel from the first day until now: being confident of
this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work
in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus [d]Christ:
even as it is right for me to think this as to you all,
because ye have me in your hearts, and that, both in
my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the
gospel, ye are all participators in my grace. For God
is my witness, how I long for you all in the bowels of
Jesus Christ.

c Rom. 1. 9. Col. 1. 3. 1 Thess. 1. 2.

d 1 Pet. 1. 5.

of as if it belonged to men of eminence or in some noted place, officially. So also he writes to them not as the assembly in Philippi, but as saints in Christ Jesus; that is to say, therefore, as individuals, for all experience is individual; conscience and heart are individual also, and these are the things with which we have to do here. It does not affect this that he specially names the overseers and ministers (or deacons, perhaps,) of the assembly. These, as we find in the first epistle to Timothy, were ordained for piety, to promote the practical welfare of those who were learning how to behave themselves "in the house of God," as the apostle said to Timothy himself. The house of any one tells its story of, and gives its character to, the man whose house it is; and the house of God is that surely which holiness becomes. Thus, the holy ones in Christ that are in Philippi are seen here with those who have their place amongst them for the help of holiness; and it is evident that while, as already said, conscience, heart, and experience are all individual things, yet that does not mean that we are independent of each other, that we cannot receive help from each other with regard to them. Thus, the overseers and ministers are fully in place in this epistle, and to them all he wishes grace and peace, the ever abiding necessity, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 He now reviews their history morally. We have seen, in the Acts that the principle developed in the work in Philippi is progress through conflict. The progress characterizes them all through; and the conflict, as we shall see, abides for them also, and does not daunt them. Thus the apostle is able to thank his God for his whole remembrance of them. There is nothing to hinder his heart going out towards them in the fullest way. This does not, of course, hinder his continual supplication for them also. He does not want this brightness to be clouded in the least, but he is able to make the supplication with joy and not with sorrow, as he realizes how thoroughly their spirit had been with the gospel, from the first day until the present time. They were men not satisfied with their own salvation, and not simply content with their individual blessing. They felt that so much, that they must have, if possible, all men share with them in it; and they felt their debt to Christ in such sort as to identify them with His interests upon the earth. These are necessary signs of real happiness and apprehension of our individual blessing. There cannot be the proper realization of it in the soul, unless as one is carried by it outside of one's self, and filled with the energy which faith and hope and love combine to inspire.

He prophesies, therefore, for them a steadfast progress, not indeed as having confidence in the flesh; but he realizes that this good work which God has begun in them is a work which will continue on to its completion in the day of Christ. Brightness and happiness merely, as we reckon these, might have been found with the Galatians, who, as we know, were soon in a very different condition, but it is Christ enjoyed that their conduct here declares. One may enjoy one's *blessing*, enjoy the comfort of one's security, without rightly enjoying Christ; but there is nothing that promotes stability and progress of the soul short of this. The evidence of it he saw in their earnest fellowship with him-

3 (9-11): The fruit of righteousness in them to the glory of God.

3 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all [e]intelligence, so that ye may judge of and approve the things that are [f]excellent, in order that ye may be pure and without offence unto the day of [g]Christ; being filled with the fruit of righteousness which is by Jesus [h]Christ to the glory and praise of [i]God.

[e] Eph. 1. 8.
[f] Rom. 2.18.
[g] Acts 24.16.
[h] Jno.15.4,5.
[i] Jno. 15. 8.

2 (12-20): The opposition

1 (12 14): The overruling of Paul's bonds.

2. [1] Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things with regard to me are fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds have become manifest [as being] in Christ in all the [j]prætorium and to all others, and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident, through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

[j] ch. 4. 22.

2 (15-17): Christ the more preached, even though, by some, of envy and strife.

[2] Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife; but some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but the other preach Christ of contention, not purely, thinking to arouse tribulation for my bonds.

self. He was in their hearts, not simply as one to whom they owed a debt of gratitude, but as one who was set for the confirmation and defence of the gospel, and who was suffering even to bonds on this account. It was this that drew out their earnest sympathy, and on the apostle's side towards them; he longed after them, in the "bowels," that is, the tender affections of Christ Jesus.

[3] He prays that this love which they manifest may abound more and more in full knowledge and all intelligence. This is what in fact love manifested in this manner is on the way to. The love of Christ is, as has already been said, the true condition of knowledge,—the eye single and the whole body full of light. Christ becomes the test of everything for the soul, and everything, therefore, is seen in its true character. They could approve thus the things that were more excellent, see things in their proper proportion to one another; and this too is needed in order to be perfectly right and without offence. It is an unhappy sign to see small things made comparatively much of, and externals take the place which only belongs to that which is inward and spiritual. While nothing, of course, is to be neglected, small as it may seem, yet a disproportionate zeal for externals, which are the smaller things, will naturally and necessarily accompany a comparative displacement of what, before God, is more excellent. He desires, therefore, that the fruit of righteousness in them may be complete and that thus, through Jesus Christ, there may be glory and praise to God from their life on earth.

2. [1] He now turns to his own circumstances in order to show how thoroughly that which seemed to be not merely against him, but against that truth for which he stood, which he represented, had been overruled of God really for the spread of the gospel and for its entrance, it may be, into places which otherwise would have been closed to it. Those bonds which were manifestly for Christ and for Christ only, (which proclaimed him a martyr, not a malefactor,) could not but draw attention to him, and make men realize what Christ must be to His own, who could thus make competent His people to suffer, and to suffer joyfully in His behalf. Thus, in all the prætorium, in the places of rule in imperial Rome, and in all other places around, the tidings went abroad; and the effect upon those themselves Christians, was to increase confidence in the Lord, instead of depressing and discouraging. Their mouths were opened to speak with more fearless confidence the word of God.

[2] But there was not unmixed comfort as to this. Even here, alas, the enemy

3 (18-20): This by the Spirit turned to the glory of Christ.

18 What is it then? At any rate, in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn out for my [k]salvation, through your [l]supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all [m]boldness, as always, now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

k ch. 2. 12.
l 2 Cor. 1.11.
m ver. 28. Eph. 6. 19.

could come in. There were those who for envy and strife could preach, as well as for good will. On the one hand, there were those who redoubled their own efforts as they sought to supply, as far as might be, the place of him who was now shut up. On the other hand, there were those who, in the spirit of contention even, could announce Christ; exalting themselves at his expense, who was now removed from any power of hindrance. These were the bright, early days of the gospel, and yet such a thing could even then be seen. How clear that where the Spirit works we must not expect but that the enemy will work also! Here, in fact, is that which would excite his enmity, and amongst Christians themselves there are always those who, through some lack of devotedness on their own parts, will be in his hands to promote his schemes.

18 But the apostle triumphs over it all. At any rate, he says, it is Christ who is preached, and *that* he can rejoice in. Christ would do His own work, would testify for Himself, whatever the spirit of His professed heralds. How blessed a thing to know, in the terrible failure which has come in since then, that, nevertheless, Christ remains the true and faithful Witness, and that for every soul with whom there is earnestness and simplicity, the witness that He gives will not really be clouded by the failure of others. For himself, the apostle realized that this was turning out for his own salvation; a strange term, as it might seem, for one like the apostle,—but only strange because we misconceive so much what "salvation" for such an one as himself should signify. To think of it as implying any lack of absolute security with regard to his eternal blessing, would be indeed to lower the Christian in the fullest possible way; but if we realize the condition of conflict which the world presents and what it means for one to be set for Christ in the world, (set to magnify Him, as he says directly by life or death), "salvation" will have a totally different meaning from that which is perhaps almost exclusively attached to it. We are apt to use it, in fact, in too technical a way and as if it meant only the one thing; that is to say, deliverance from guilt and condemnation. This is a salvation which is of God entirely and which we start with. No incidents of the way, no attainments that we can make, can either imperil this or increase its blessedness. God *has* saved us. That is the starting point; but then, on the other hand, salvation is used in other senses in the New Testament. It is used, of course, for that final salvation as to which at present we are only "saved in hope," when there will be complete deliverance from all that now makes one groan, "waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body;" but in this final form salvation is again a salvation of God entirely. We have no part in it ourselves, except to receive it. It is Christ, as the apostle tells us here afterwards, whom we wait for as Saviour, who will Himself change our body of humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body; so that in this also we have that of which the apostle cannot possibly be speaking here.

There is a third application of the term, however, which the second chapter will introduce us fully to, a salvation in which we have our part; God working in us and we working out. This is salvation from all the perils of the way, and what perils to one to whom to live is Christ! The peril is never to be made light of and was what he felt, that after all, Christ might not, (at least as He should be,) be magnified in His own.

3 (21-26): A single eye making manifest.

3. For to me to live is [n]Christ, and to die, gain: but if to live in the flesh [is my lot] this is worth my while: but what I shall choose I cannot tell. But I am in a strait betwixt two, having the desire to depart and be with [o]Christ, [for]* it is very much better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall [p]abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in faith; that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus, through me, by my presence with you [q]again.

4 (27-30): Tested in affliction.

4. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel

[n] Gal. 2. 20.
[o] 2 Cor. 5. 8.
[p] ch. 2. 24.
[q] 2 Cor. 1. 14.

* "For" is omitted in the large number of MSS. and versions.

This was what was before the apostle. The circumstances of which he speaks here, that seemed most against him, were things which really tended to help him in this direction, to deliver him from self-confidence, to make him realize that it was God, after all, who had all things in His hand; and that, apostle as he was, he was only the humble instrument of God's will who could as well set him aside and carry on His work without him as use him for His purpose. This was, in fact, to such as the apostle, a manifest help and encouragement; and here the prayers of the saints counted for something, and he solicits them; while the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ could not be wanting for one set for Him. He shows us directly here what is in his thought. His earnest expectation and his hope was that he should be ashamed in nothing, but that with all boldness, as always, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death. Salvation in such a case must necessarily have its significance from the point of view of him who speaks of it, and his earnestness to realize it only shows him the more manifestly to be the man he was.

3. He now explicitly assures us of what is before him. The principle of his life was this: to him to live was Christ. Necessarily, for such an one, to die, on the other hand, would be gain. He would go to Christ; and he represents himself in a certain difficulty with regard to these two things, whether to choose life or death. To die was gain; to live was worth his while. He could not possibly want motive to live, as he looked around him and realized the condition of men and the labor of Christ Himself in their behalf. Thus there were two motives which would lead him in different directions. He could not but desire to depart and be with Christ; which, for himself, personally, would be very much better; but if he looked at the saints and thought of them, then his remaining in the flesh was more necessary, and the simple heart for Christ which carried him through all perplexities could decide for him, that, therefore, he would remain, that their progress and joy in the faith might be ministered to. It was not in the power of that Rome in which he was, head of the whole world, and with no apparent possibility for anything to thwart her will,—it was impossible for Rome to decide as to this poor prisoner. Death for him, or life, was not found by any imperial decree. Christ was the Lord of all; and thus he can prophesy not merely with regard to his continuing to live, but even his return to them again, that "your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus through me, by my presence with you again." How simply is the one, for whom Christ is the light upon the path, delivered from perplexity, just in proportion to the simplicity of his soul in this respect! This by itself would assure us that there was, in fact, a way for the apostle out of that Roman prison-house in which he was just now shut up, and that he *did* have for a time that liberty which has been so much questioned on the ground of historical evidence. Here is something more than history. It is the confidence of a soul for whom Christ decides absolutely his path, and such confidence, clear sighted as he assures us it was, could not possibly be disappointed.

4. He turns to them once more in his earnest desire for them, that they may

of [r]Christ, that whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand firm in one spirit, with [s]one soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your [t]salvation, and that from God; because to you hath been granted, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on [u]him, but also to suffer for his [v]sake: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

r *cf.* Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10.
s 1 Cor. 1.10.
t *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 5.
u Eph. 2. 8.
v 1 Pet.4.16.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.)

Christ in His self-humiliation our pattern.

1 (1-11): The mind of Christ.
1 (1-4): The oneness of mind to be attained by absence of self seeking.

1. [1] IF there be, therefore, any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the [w]Spirit, if any bowels and compassions, fulfil ye my joy that ye be of the same [x]mind, having the same love, one in soul, thinking one thing; let nothing be in the spirit of

w 2 Cor. 13. 14.
x ch. 1. 27.

still conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that, present with them or absent, he may find them standing firm in one spirit, with one heart, unwearyingly laboring in that same conflict which in his person the gospel was experiencing. Opposers there would be and were. They had realized this from the very beginning of their Christian course. It was a thing which they had taken account of, and which, therefore, now would not frighten them. A joyful spirit of confidence in this respect was itself an evidence that these adversaries would meet destruction, and that they themselves were heirs of that salvation which is from God alone. The suffering was as much a gift from God to them as their believing on Christ had been. It was a privilege, not something to be mourned over or regretted. They were partaking of that which they had seen in him when he was amongst them, and still heard to be his portion.

Div. 2.

We have now, therefore, set before us the whole path to its issue in glory, but as trodden in the first place and in full reality by Him who had come down into the world, drawn by His love alone, giving up all which was His just right, which He might have retained, and taking His place amongst men, to come down to the very lowest possible place in this way, the death of the cross. Such was the path which had ended, however, for Him in the glory in which now He was, and where every knee should shortly bow to Him and every tongue confess Him Lord. Such, then, is the pattern for us of One perfect in the path, but the apostle shows us also that there were, in fact, those who were running in it witnesses to the joy which, for themselves also, could make them despise the shame, and enable them to run on stedfastly to the goal which already has been shown us,—Christ Himself—the foremost in the race and who has reached the end of it.

1. He desires for the Philippians that there may be amongst them but one mind, but then, this mind could, therefore, only be the mind of Christ. If here for Him, representing Him on earth, they must realize the spirit in which He walked upon earth. There was abundant blessing that they had found already, which would be an incitement to them for this. Faith, hope and love, all drew them on, and were in them the testimony of that love which Christ had shown them.

[1] He appeals, therefore, to the comfort in Christ which they had enjoyed, the

strife or vain [y]glory, but in lowliness of mind each esteeming the other better than himself; regarding not each his own things but each of you the things of others also.

2 (5-8): Christ's humiliation, even to the cross.

2 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of [z]God, did not esteem it an object to be grasped* to be on an equality with [a]God; but emptied [b]himself, taking the form of a

y Gal. 5. 26.

z Jno. 17. 5.

a *cf.* Jno.10. 30.

b 2 Cor. 8. 9.

* Most say, "of rapine."

consolation of a love which had sought them and which was with them ever, a communion of the Spirit which had in it, therefore, a true, divine energy. There were bowels and compassions, tender thoughts and desires for others which the Spirit had awakened. He could appeal to them, therefore, by all this, that they would fulfil what was his joy for them, that there might be that perfect unity of mind which was but the unity of one aim, one interest,—the same love responsive in them all, soul joined to soul by this precious sympathy. Here oneness of mind would be not from mere reception of a common creed, but as the whole outcome of truth received, with all its blessed effects, as God wrought in them by it. The first necessity for this was that the spirit of the world, as the spirit of strife, with which the world was full, of vain glory which would necessitate a striving after it, should be absent from them. In the presence of God, lowliness is that which marks the soul. How could pride be nursed in such a presence? and where as a consequence realizing what they were themselves, of which they knew more, necessarily, than they could know of others? The result would be simple enough, the esteeming others as better than themselves. With regard to others, we have to give *them* credit to the full with regard to things in which we cannot know. With regard to ourselves, we are not called upon to spare ourselves; and in the consciousness of the love which is towards us, spite of all we are, we shall be delivered from any desire to make ourselves more than others. From this point of view, we can look upon each other, not with suspicion or envy, but, on the contrary, as rejoicing in that which we find of Christ in them. This is, in fact, the truest blessing for our own souls,—to walk in the enjoyment of that which Christ is, to all His own around us, and of the effects, therefore, produced by the reality of what Christ is, thus enjoyed.

2 Now he puts before them this mind that was to be in them; a marvelous thing indeed, that, for such as we are, this mind can be enjoined and expected to be found in us,—the mind of One who, from a height of glory beyond possible apprehension, could come down, moved by His love alone, into the lowest possible depth where again the eye cannot follow Him, every step the giving up afresh of something that might be held! This is the course which manifests the mind of Christ, a course of continued self-denial and self-sacrifice, yet with an object which makes this not to be realized indeed as such. Here, we have then before us this wonderful path,—One subsisting in the form of God, that is to say, God Himself manifestly, so that there could be no question with regard to Him at all, yet this *form* of God He gave up; not the divine reality, which was, of necessity, His at all times, but the manifestation of it, the outward aspect. This he did not esteem "an object to be grasped," this equality with God. This, no doubt, is the proper translation here. It is much more than His not esteeming it robbery to be equal with Him. The point is, as the next words show us, that He was not seeking to retain that which was His without any question, but "emptying Himself."

In this spirit, He took the place of a bond-servant in the likeness of men. He does not tarry among angels, unutterable condescension as that would be. The need of men appeals to Him and brings Him on. He is not merely a Man, but in the *likeness* of men also, (in all the truth of that which manhood implies,)

[c] bondsman, becoming in the likeness of [d] men; and having been found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto [e] death, yea, the death of the [f] cross.

3 (9-11): His exaltation to the glory of the Father.

3 Wherefore also, God hath highly exalted [g] him and given to him a * name which is above every [h] name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should [i] bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal [beings], and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is [j] Lord to the glory of God the [k] Father.

c Luk.22.27. d Heb. 2.14. e Heb. 5. 8. f Gal. 3. 13. g Acts 2. 33. h Eph. 1.20, 21. i Isa. 45. 23. Matt.28.18. Jno. 13. 13. j Rev. 19.16. k cf. Rom.6. 4.

* Some read, "that."

but a Manhood necessarily without blemish, a Man unfallen, nay, more perfect and greater than Adam before the fall. Here then, He was found amongst us, but even here He could not tarry. Love brought Him farther in this path which continually descended. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." The very words show the glory that was His, and that that which was the consequence of the fall had no title over Him. It was in His self-humiliation that He stooped to death, this being for Him a path of obedience in which God was infinitely glorified.

But death itself was not the whole matter here. There was a depth far below death merely, the death of the Cross: not simply a death of shame, or which showed (as it did show) man's rejection of Him, but beyond all that, a death in which alone man's need could be reached, a death which alone could work atonement, a death, as we have seen in Galatians, of curse and penalty, not from man simply, but from God Himself. Here was the lowest point. Obedience itself could go no farther; and here was, at the same time, necessarily therefore, the full display of His proper glory to a soul that can realize it. Who could have stood in this place to do this work, but Himself alone? Who could, in utter loneliness and in the feebleness of humanity,—for "He was crucified through weakness,"—yet lay the foundation upon which could be securely built a new creation brighter than all before; and where God should be seen in the full display of righteousness and holiness and love, His whole nature manifested, there where every element of trial and opposition was met and mastered! Here is the pattern path. For us it is not, after all, a path that we could take, save only in the principle of it, the mind which the apostle says we are to have of One who was perfect in the obedience which made the greatest demands upon Him, and in which every step of the way was a further surrender of that which otherwise was His to retain. How wonderful, we may say again, that God should work in such as we are any resemblance to this mind of Christ, and how wonderfully must He have supplied and qualified us, in order to expect any such thing rightly from us!

3 To this point it is Christ's course that we see, God leaving Him to it. Power was not on His side, but against Him. It was not by power that this conflict could be fought to victory, or those ends that He sought attained. Hitherto Christ might seem to be alone the worker, God simply remaining an impassive spectator of His course, but now the whole heart of God comes out manifestly. Once He has reached this point, the work being accomplished, the result gained, God now manifests Himself completely. "He has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Thus we see the goal reached. All opposition is vanquished and ceases. Every knee even of infernal beings must in result bow to Him. Everywhere He is confessed the Lord of all, a Man still, in the full reality of manhood, but a Man

2 (12-30): Witnesses.
1 (12,13): God working in, they are to work out His will.
2 (14-16): And as sons of God hold forth the word.

2. [1] So, then, my beloved, even as ye have always [l]obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and [m]trembling; for it is God who worketh in you, both the willing and the working according to his good [n]pleasure.

[2] Do all things without [o]murmurings and [p]disputings; that ye may be harmless and simple, children of God without [q]blame, in the midst of a crooked and perverse [r]generation, among whom ye appear as lights in the [s]world, holding forth the word of [t]life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain nor labor in [u]vain.

l ch. 1. 5.
m 1 Cor. 2.3.
n 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 3. 5.
o 1 Cor. 10. 10.
p Rom. 14.1.
q 1 Thess.5. 23.
r Deut.32.5.
s Matt. 5.14.
t 1 Thess. 1. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 23.
u 1 Thess.2. 19.

in whom now all that was lost or imperilled by the fall is restored and more than restored. The glory of God shines out as nowhere else.

2. This then is the example set before us, one that we might say, perhaps, is absolutely beyond us. We may concede that it is beyond us, but not that this would induce hopelessness. On the contrary, the perfection of the standard is that which gives continually fresh desire for acquirement, and in an object such as this is for the heart, an energy for acquiring. But we have now before us witnesses amongst mere men, who present us with such actual accomplishment in men as we can no longer say, therefore, is beyond us. Whatever such an one as Paul might be in this respect, there is no inherent impossibility in our following him, even as he followed Christ. Paul was a man encompassed with the same difficulties as those that we have, and we, on the other hand, have dwelling in us the same Spirit as he had.

[1] The apostle immediately encourages us, in fact, with the assurance that if we are to work out our own salvation, yet it is God who worketh in us both the willing and the doing. We have already seen what this working out of salvation means, that it applies to the difficulties in the way, a salvation from all that would hinder the glorifying of Christ in our life here. It is this, therefore, which is to induce the fear and trembling; not in selfish dread, but the sense of our responsibility to Him to whom we owe our all and whose our life is. Plenty there is to make us serious in such work as this, but nothing to dishearten us. If God has taken in hand to work in us after this fashion, that is ample security for our success. The fact that the apostle was now absent from them, whose presence had been so great a comfort and blessing to their souls, was only to make them more completely realize this divine power which was carrying them on to the full blessing beyond.

[2] They were to preserve, on the one hand, the character which belonged to them, and on the other, to hold forth that word of life which was their public testimony in the world. The one must have the other as an accompaniment, if it was to be a testimony for, instead of against the One they heralded. Solemn it is to realize that as witnesses for Christ there can by no possibility be a negative position for us. We have the responsibility of witnesses; and if we are not that, so as to commend Christ to others, we cannot help but dishonor Him.

The apostle bids them, therefore, act in the spirit of those who are in full subjection to God, without murmuring at circumstances which they might pass through, without reasonings such as unbelief might urge, where there was such a spirit. On the other hand, they were to be harmless, children of God, who could take that name without bringing reproach upon it; and that in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse. Stars are best seen in the night, though they may shine at all times; and the world, such as it is, is the best possible place for testimony of this kind. As lights in it, they would not shine indeed

3 (17, 18): Willing to be a libation on their sacrifice.
4 (19-24): Timotheus approved amid general departure.

3 But if also I am poured out as a drink-offering on the [v]sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice together with you all. In like manner, do ye also rejoice, and rejoice with me

4 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be refreshed, knowing your [w]affairs. For I have no one like-minded, who will genuinely care as to your affairs; for all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him that as a child with a father he hath served with me in the work of the [z]gospel. Him, therefore, I hope to send immediately, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me: but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come [y]shortly.

v Num.28.7.
w Col. 4. 8.
x 1 Cor.4.17.
y Phile. 22.

by their own light. Christians are planets and not suns. The word of life held forth is that which declares the light to be reflected light, from Him who, though absent, (for it is night time now,) is yet in this sense still the true light of it. Without the testimony to Christ, the best life may appear only to testify of what is natural in man. Men constantly plead, as we know, the lives of others who make no profession. The "word of life" held forth gives the glory to God which is His due, shows that the power is outside one's self, while the effect upon one is manifest. The two things are here put in their place, the life and the light. The life in Christ was the light, but not so with us, although without the life the light would indeed be darkened. Their testimony would be for the apostle a thing to glory in, in the day of Christ, when it would be seen that he had "not run in vain nor labored in vain;" for a labor really vain must of necessity show a great defect in its own character. No true labor can be in vain in the Lord, as the apostle assures us.

3 So much then as to the character of witness on the part of Christians; but now we have examples in actual life. First of all, the apostle himself, who in the joy which so fully characterized him, a joy in Christ, which is strength for all the way, was ready in the spirit of his Master to be poured out even as a drink-offering on the sacrifice and service of the disciples' faith. The drink-offering was itself the symbol of joy; here a joy which set the offerer of it beyond all selfish calculation. He could pour out his life in the mere joy of the service of others. It was one who, as we know, was the prisoner of Jesus Christ at this time, who could say this; and who could bid them, therefore, rejoice, and rejoice with him, in that very suffering. Here is the first and most perfect witness amongst men merely, to the ability given of God to follow Christ. He does not give it openly as an example, but the Spirit of God, nevertheless, surely would draw our attention to it. It was the simple expression of his own joy, without a thought, one may say, of any peculiar testimony in it. The witness to Christ is that just in the proportion in which he is unconscious of being so. But he now brings forward those of whom he can speak as witnesses.

4 First of all, we have here Timotheus, true to his name, a man who "honors God;" now, alas, all the more manifest for what he was, in the midst of a departure sad enough to realize in days such as we are contemplating. "All seek their own," the apostle could say, "not the things of Jesus Christ;" and yet he was in the midst of that Roman assembly of whom, in his epistle to them, he had spoken as having a faith which was being proclaimed in the whole world. How short a time this testimony seems to have lasted! But Timotheus is not dragged down by it. We are not made by our circumstances; that is, if there is any vigor in our souls at all. We are *manifested* by them, which is a very different thing. One can easily look at the condition of things around and make it an excuse for the inexcusableness of our own condition; but God has

5 (25 30): Epaphroditus.

5 But I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and minister to my [z]need; for he longed after you all, and was sore troubled because ye had heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not indeed on him alone, but also upon me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow. I have sent him, therefore, the more diligently, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord, with all joy, and hold such in [a]honor: because for the sake of the work he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life that he might supply that which was lacking in your service toward [b]me.

z ch. 4. 18.

a 1 Cor. 16. 18. 1 Thess. 5. 12.

b 1 Cor. 16. 17.

not ordained for us that we should be down to the level of those around us. All His grace abides for us, none the less. The power of the Spirit is not a mere register of the outside temperature. If men seek their own things, they will excuse themselves by the fact that they are only in keeping with the company around them. If Christ be really before the soul, it will be impossible to do so. This would rather stir up and energize one who thought of Him to serve Him the more earnestly. Thus it was with Timothy, a worthy spiritual child of such a father as Paul was, one who had served as companion with him in the work of the gospel. He had, therefore, in mind to send him immediately to them—another beautiful example as to himself of that self-denying love which wrought in him.

5 And this goes further, for not only would he send Timothy, but he had thought it necessary already to send back to them Epaphroditus, one who had been their messenger, and minister on their part to his need, whom yet he would dismiss from the place in which his value had been thoroughly felt, in order that he might now give joy to the Philippians. There was a special reason for this on Epaphroditus' part, which shows him as another witness to the attainment of the mind in Christ. He had been sick, nigh unto death, and sick from the work into which he had thrown himself, realizing the responsibility of ministering to one identified with the gospel as the apostle was; a responsibility which, in a sense, was rather that of others, but which lacked through no fault of theirs. It was this lack that he was filling up, and with such energy and zeal that he had hazarded his life in doing this. They were to receive him, therefore, in the Lord, with all joy; and, in fact, the apostle could count so much upon their sympathy with him that he could not be content just with the assurance of his present recovery, but must send him to them, that they might satisfy themselves about it. How beautiful a testimony still to the one who could speak and act thus. How necessarily in all this the character of the man, the heart that was in him, shows itself! Feeling, on the one hand, with no ascetic stoicism, the mercy God had shown to him through Epaphroditus, the mercy He now shows in restoring him, and yet ready to sacrifice what he could realize thus the value of, almost, as one might say, without the need of doing this, merely to make their joy complete. Such, then, are the examples given us, in a way marked by such beautiful simplicity, of the possibility of the attainment of the mind of Christ in those who like ourselves were men, in all the weakness of men, and in all the difficulties, if not more than all the difficulties that encompass us also.

Div. 3.

The apostle has already led us up to the blessed Object before him. What he has been just enlarging upon is the example of the Lord's humiliation, but he

DIVISION 3. (Chap. iii.)

Christ in glory the Goal and Prize.

1 (1-3): The true circumcision.

1. FOR the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord: to write the same things to you to me indeed is not irksome, and for you it is safe. Beware of [c]dogs, beware of [d]evil-workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in [e]flesh.

[c] Matt. 7. 6. Rev. 22.15.
[d] 1 Tim.1.7.
[e] Col. 2. 11.

is now going to enlarge upon the glory which is his strength for such a path as this; the light which now shines for us upon the path, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. It is beautiful to realize that the very thing that is wanting to him now, as we look at him here, is the very thing which makes him a pilgrim and a racer,—an Object outside himself, something which he has not yet attained, but to which, because of its glory for him, he gives his whole energy to pressing on for its attainment. This is what characterizes all that we have here. His look is forward only. A racer does not look at the road on each side. He looks at what is before him; and so it is that in everything here, the principle is "forgetting that which is behind, and pressing on to that which is before." This is true of all attainment and experiences by the way, as it is of other things. It is not merely the world which is left behind,—that surely; but he himself, whatever up to the present he might be, is still left behind. It is Christ before him that gives oneness of purpose and character to his present life.

1. The thing, therefore, that he would press upon them now, as if it was all he wanted to say, was, "Rejoice in the Lord." He might seem to be insisting upon this in almost a needless manner, but it was not needless; nor for those who realized what Christ was to them, irksome either. There was opposition also. There were "dogs," evil workmen, men of the concision, just, surely, the judaizing spirit that we have seen active in the other epistles. He gives them the same title that they would apply to Gentiles. They were dogs, unclean, ferocious creatures. They were workmen it is true, but evil workmen, and busy for no good end. They were the "*con*cision," the mutilators of the flesh, as we may say, but which left it still with real strength for hindrance. After all, it was flesh they trusted in. The law, as we have seen many times, has to do with the man in the flesh and no other. Ascetic severity may be practised even to any extent, as the apostle has told us in Colossians, while the flesh gets real satisfaction by this. He will not call them the *circum*cision, the title they would have given themselves; for, now that Christianity has come, true circumcision is no more in the flesh, but is spiritual. There had indeed always to be what was spiritual in connection with it, to make it true for God; but now the characteristics of the circumcision are spiritual altogether. *We* are that, he says, who worship in the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who have no confidence in the flesh. Manifest it is that this "no confidence in the flesh" applies as much to the flesh in the Christian as to any other. Confidence in self, of any kind, is confidence in the flesh. The opposite to it here, the Object of all glorying, is Christ Himself. The knowledge of the new man is, as we have seen, Christ is all; and this it is that makes worshipers in the power of the Spirit of God, for Christ alone is He whom the Spirit glorifies, and with whom He occupies the heart. Beautiful it is to see how here the lesson of Romans, as already said, has been learned. There is no mention all the way through the epistle by the apostle, on his own part, of conflict with the flesh. His heart is there where the flesh can have no place. "The law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, has set" him "free from the law of sin and death." This Object beyond himself has made him master of himself. There is a real attainment which is the very opposite of that self-conscious sanctification which

2 (4-7): Rejected confidences.

2. Though I have matter of confidence, even in the flesh: if any other think to trust in the flesh, I rather: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of [f]Benjamin, a Hebrew of [g]Hebrews; as touching the law a [h]Pharisee; as to zeal, persecuting the [i]church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, found [j]blameless; but what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for [k]Christ.

3 (8-11): The aim, to win Christ.

3. Yea, verily, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;

[f] Rom. 11.1.
[g] 2 Cor. 11. 22.
[h] Acts 23. 6.
[i] Acts 22. 3.
[j] *ctr.* Rom. 7. 7-9.
[k] Col. 3. 10, 11.

so many are seeking now. On the contrary, he sees self in such a way as that he can trust it no longer, and Christ, not self, (good or bad either,) is the One before his eyes. He does not turn back to tell you of his own experience. He is not thinking of his own attainments. He has attained nothing yet, as it were, until he is with Christ in glory. This is the genuine Christian spirit, as far removed from the helpless misery of the bondage which some would persuade us is normal for the Christian, as it is, on the other hand, far from all Pharisaic self-satisfaction or comfort in one's own condition.

2. He does indeed now tell us what ground of comfort he might have, if any, in the flesh; but only to dismiss it all as unworthy; as that which, if it were gain to him, were all the more, on account of the Christ before him, loss indeed. Anything which gave value and importance to himself would be but loss. It is in Christ that he finds all; and there is no separate interest, no treasure of any kind apart from Christ; but it is of use for him to show that he is not despising things which were not his. On the other hand, he had all that the proudest Jew could boast himself of,—a Jew himself, a circumcised man, circumcised the eighth day, of Israel's race, of the tribe of Benjamin,—not a descendant of one of Jacob's handmaids,—a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a thorough, out and out Jew, unmixed with Gentilism in any way. As to the law itself, one of the straitest sect, a Pharisee; as to zeal, (the kind of zeal that goes with law keeping,) persecuting the Church of God; but as to himself also, with regard to such righteousness as could be found in man under law, blameless. Plainly he was one in whom there was no conscious evil indulged to awaken the clamor of conscience in his soul. As he says in Galatians, he was no sinner of the Gentiles. The very things which made him afterwards to realize himself the chief of sinners were, in this way, to him, (in the state of which he speaks,) only things to be credited to him for good. As he has told us in Romans, he had not yet found the power of that commandment which brings about the full detection of man's natural evil, "Thou shalt not lust."

All this was gain to him, then. He felt and valued it; but Christ had been revealed, and where was the value now? He does not stop to debate about these things; he does not sift them to show that after all they were not what they seemed. Whatever they were, make them as much as possible, pile them up mountains high, Christ in glory set them aside altogether. They were not merely slight in gain; they were *loss*. He wanted nothing but that Christ who had been revealed to him. How blessed and wonderful to remember that this is, after all, not the picture simply of a great apostle. It is substantially the picture of a Christian in his normal character as that. The joy and the power of Christian life are found here, and the joy is the power. The life in its highest character, the spiritual condition in its fullest blessedness, are all found here.

3. It was not merely, however, for him the throwing aside of that which was religious gain to him. He had thrown all things aside. He had suffered the loss of all things and counted them, not to be some valuable sacrifice that he had made, but mere defilement, for it was Christ who was before him to be gained. He is not, from this point of view, telling us that he has gained Christ,

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the [l]law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through [m]faith; that I may know him and the power of his [n]resurrection, and the fellowship of his [o]sufferings, being conformed unto his death; if in any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the [p]dead.

4 (12-16): The practical effect of what is lacking.

4. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made [q]perfect, but I press on if so be that I may lay hold, seeing that also I have been laid hold of by Christ [r]Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself yet to

l Rom. 10.3.
m Rom. 30. Rom. 10.6. 1 Cor. 1.30.
n Eph. 1.19, 20.
o Rom.8.17. 2 Tim.2.12.
p Luk.20.35.
q Heb.12.23.
r Heb. 2.16.

but that he is *seeking to win Him.* It is the actual possession of Christ in glory that he is thinking of. When there, what would it be as to himself? From that point of view, he may be permitted to think of himself. What will the man find as to himself who has thus won Christ? Not, he says, his own righteousness: that would be the legal principle essentially. He would be found in Christ, in possession of the righteousness which is by faith of Christ, righteousness which, he repeats emphatically, is of God, of His bestowal, through faith, that humblest of principles, which necessarily turns its back upon all that is of self, to lay hold of Another.

This is then the One he wants to know. He knows Him, but does not count this knowledge yet as the knowledge that he seeks. He cannot, of course, set aside this, as he has set aside other things. He would not mean to undervalue it; it was all of Christ that for the present he had; but what, nevertheless, would it be in that day when Christ Himself would be at last before his eyes, the goal of the race he had been running? He wanted to know Him after this manner, to know the power of His resurrection, not, as many think, a present power, therefore of resurrection in his soul,—that he already knew. He was risen with Christ and knew it; but it is not a condition to be attained down here, still less a condition that he had attained, that he was thinking of, but that which will put him in the place in which he seeks to be; and as a prisoner of Christ in the Roman dungeon, he is entitled to think here of the sufferings attendant, and of the death which might so easily be before him. What then? That would be his way through to the resurrection from among the dead. Thus, the sufferings themselves, the manner of death, whatever it were, if it were complete conformity to Christ's crucifixion, he would take it as that which only the more assimilated him to Christ for the present, while it was the way which led on to the apprehension of the power of that resurrection which would at last bring him to Christ in glory. As already said we have to realize, for the apprehension of what is here, that it is Christ Himself before his eyes, an Object outside the world, that is filling them. It is this and not any intervening thing that he is pressing after. It is no spiritual condition apart from this. He wants no halting place, no place to loiter in by the way, no present satisfaction, as it were, except that indeed which is derived from the blessed Object ever drawing nearer, and which is gaining upon his soul with every step he takes.

4. But he insists upon it that he has not attained, he is not already perfected. It is this that makes him pursue, with such stedfastness of aim and purpose, that which is before him. He wants to apprehend, that is, to lay hold of, that for which Christ has already laid hold of him. He is doing one thing, therefore, —how all our lives are spoilt by the desire to do more things than one! He is "forgetting the things behind, stretching out to the things before," pressing ever to the goal "for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus;" not simply the *high* calling, but the "calling above," the calling to a place outside the earth altogether. This is what gave him the stedfastness which was

have laid hold; but one thing [I do], forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on towards the [s]goal for the [t]prize of the calling on high of God in Christ [u]Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as are [v]perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be differently minded, this also God shall reveal to you: only whereto we have already attained, let us walk in the same [w]steps.

5 (17-21): The end as the way.

5. Brethren, be imitators together of me and mark them who so walk as ye have us for an [x]ensample; for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of [y]Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our commonwealth hath its existence in the [z]heavens, from whence also we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus [a]Christ, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity with his body of [b]glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things to [c]himself.

s 1 Cor. 9.24.
t *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7.
u Heb. 3. 1.
v 1 Cor. 2. 6.
w Gal. 5. 25. Col. 3. 7.
x 1 Cor. 11. 1. 1 Thess. 1. 6.
y Luk. 14. 27.
z Heb. 11. 13, 14.
a 1 Cor. 1. 7. 1 Thess. 1. 10.
b 1 Cor. 15. 52.
c 1 Cor. 15. 27.

manifestly his. This is what made him the man he was, and this attitude is what indeed he calls "perfection." If men would be perfect, let them be thus minded; and then, as to the details, whatever other minds they might have, God would make all plain to them. Is not this that which we need so much,—not to seek, as it were, to be of the same mind with one another? As to the details of the path, the perseverance in the path is that which only aright can make all details plain. It is manifest that as we press along a road, (one of many roads, let us say, all tending to the same point at last,) we cannot see things where we are just as others see them from their own points of view. We see things from where we are. As we get on further, each one of us, we find of necessity that our view of things is growing to be the same; not exactly because we have sought to have this so, but rather that it is the necessary result of all pressing on together to the one place in which we shall at last see absolutely together, eye to eye. Here it is that the prize awaits us. Christ is both goal and prize at the same time. What a perfect solution it will be of all the difficulties of the way! How the light of the glory of God will make everything absolutely plain, and not merely plain, but bright also!

5. "Nevertheless," he says, "whereto we have already attained, let us walk in the same steps;" that is, whatever may be our convictions at the present, let us act according to these convictions. Let us have truth practical. If we want it to be what the truth should be, we must walk in it to make it real. In this way, also, he could exhort them to follow him as he was following Christ,—to follow any others who were thus walking: not, as is evident, a following of man as man. We have to scrutinize the walk in order rightly to follow it. No man is altogether a model, and therefore Paul must say of himself, giving us the limit in this: "as I follow Christ." This brings us of necessity, to Christ Himself after all, as the one perfect Example for us; while, at the same time, we recognize and are encouraged by the example of those who are following Him. But he has now to warn them that already there were many walking,—of course with a profession, which is argued by the walk, and yet of whom he had told them often, and now even weeping told them, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ. Not enemies of Christ Himself, exactly; that is not the thing of which he is speaking. They take no place of open adversaries, clearly, and they may even make much of the cross of Christ itself, if it were

DIVISION 4. (Chap. iv.)

The experience of Christ through all the way.

1 (1-4): The Lord for a constant joy.

1. WHEREFORE, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [d]beloved. I exhort Euodia and I exhort Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee, also, true yoke fellow, assist those [women] who have striven along with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of [e]life. Rejoice in the Lord alway; again, I will say, [f]rejoice.

d Eph. 6.10.

e Luk.10.20.
f ch. 3. 1.

to shelter themselves by the grace that is in it from the rightful judgment of their unholy ways. It was possible, even then, as we know, to turn the grace of God into fleshly license, but this could not possibly avert the end to which such a course would lead. We have seen again and again that there is a way which leads to a certain end, and which will always lead there, although the mercy and goodness of God are not restricted by this; and there is a way of death from which, if grace works, it must deliver the soul. It cannot save one in it. For these, then, their end was destruction. Their god was really their belly; that is to say, the fleshly craving in them had never been set aside by any satisfaction that they had found for themselves in Christ. The craving of an unrenewed nature,—for he is not speaking of Christians, plainly,—led and governed them. These were their god, as he says, in strong, decisive language; and so deceived could they be as to glory in their shame. Earthly things they valued and secured,—prided themselves upon securing them. How different from that which we have had before us as the apostle's example!

Here, then, was the awful contrast that could yet be found amongst professing Christians in that day; and they were not few, but many, he tells us, who walked thus. "For our citizenship," he adds in contrast, "is in the heavens." All our interests, all our relationships, all our rights, all our gains are there; and while it is true that that leaves us, in the meanwhile, as it were, perhaps, but scantily provided, we are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform the very body of our humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has, even to subdue all things to Himself. That is a hope which clearly can never interfere with the pressing on in the path meanwhile,—the very opposite. The power of it is that the Christ who is at the end of the way is thus brought so near us, we may arrive there at any moment; like the disciples who, receiving Christ into the ship, were immediately at the land whither they were going. There is no necessity of so many steps upon this path of which we have been told. Divine grace may cut it short at any time. God may fulfil all our hopes in a speedier way than we can imagine.

Div. 4.

The doctrine, if we may call it so, (though it is doctrine very different plainly from that which we have had in the other epistles,) is now complete. Nevertheless, one thing remains, without which the epistle, as a whole, could not be complete. He who has been running this path with Christ, who has been thus before him,—he is to give us his experience now; and manifestly it is the experience of one who on both sides can speak with decision. He knows what Christ is. He knows the various difficulties and exigencies of the way itself. What is needed now, is to put the two together as he does here, and to show that for all these things Christ has been found competent, absolutely so.

1. There are exhortations to others which naturally come in here. His brethren are, as he has shown us, in his heart. He longs after them. They are

2 (5-9): Reliance on God in occupation with the good alone.

2. Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is [g]nigh. Be anxious about [h]nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with [i]thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to [j]God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ [k]Jesus. For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if any praise, think on these [l]things. What ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in [m]me, these things do, and the God of peace shall be with [n]you.

3 (10-13): The fulness found in Christ.

3. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now, however, at length you have revived your thought for me;

[g] Heb.10.25. [h] Matt.6.25. [i] 1 Thess. 5. 17, 18. [j] Luk. 18. 1. [k] Isa. 26. 3. [l] *ctr.* Num. 19. 21. [m] 1 Cor. 4. 17. [n] Rom. 15. 33. Rom.16.20. 2 Cor.13.11. 1 Thess. 5. 23.

his joy, and to be his crown. He would have them stand fast in the Lord. That is a standing fast which means, of necessity, the fullest progress. He exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. It is the common purpose of heart, the common thought of the One they serve that is to bring them right. And he presses upon one who is not named, but whom he calls his yoke-fellow, (perhaps the Epaphroditus who seems to be carrying the letter, and whom he is sending to them,) urging him to assist these who have contended along with him in the gospel, with Clement and other fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life. And again he urges upon them this joy in the Lord that he can never forget. They are to "rejoice in the Lord always," and he will still repeat it, he will say "rejoice."

2. In this way, they will indeed be competent to let their moderation be known to all men. They can be moderate enough as to all the things of life, as men say, when the Lord is thus their joy, and when the Lord is near also: near, I suppose, as one who never leaves His people, not perhaps in the sense that He is coming, (although He *is* coming,) but whether He comes or not, He is always with His people. They need be anxious, therefore, about nothing. Prayer became them, the confession of dependence, which, in a creature, is always becoming. Prayer and supplication, then, they could use with regard to everything, but with thanksgiving, which delivers the prayer itself from being the expression of any unbelief or murmuring, and also increases confidence in the prayer itself to One whose answers have been already manifest. Thus, spreading out before the omniscient eye of God who loves us, all their need, the peace of God, the peace in which He abides Himself, the peace which is the consciousness of perfect command of everything, so that nothing, after all, can disturb the serenity of perfect confidence, this peace of God, he says, "Shall guard your hearts and thoughts by Christ Jesus." The heart kept from wandering, the thoughts will be formed aright.

Then he would have them occupied, not with the evil around, of which there was so much, as we have learned, but with the very opposite. The heart can only find blessing in the contemplation of that which is true, noble, just, pure, amiable and of good report. These are the things to be thought about, so that the power of evil itself may not disturb us, not weigh us down, not provoke in us a spirit of mere judgment, such as evil may naturally arouse. Again he can speak of what they had seen in him as an example,—what they had learned and received and heard from him also. They were to do these things, and the God of peace, not merely peace, but the *God* of peace, would be with them.

3. He now turns to speak of that which might at first sight seem personal to himself. Personal it is, but experience is personal, and here it is that we are to

though surely ye did also think of me, but lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: in everything and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer [o]want. I can do all things through him who strengtheneth [p]me.

4 (14-23): The part the Philippians had had. Closing greetings.

4. But ye have done well in taking part with my affliction; and this also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I came out of Macedonia, no assembly communicated with me in the way of giving and receiving, save ye alone; for also in Thessalonica, once and again, ye sent unto me for my needs. Not that I seek a gift, but I seek fruit abounding to your [q]account. But I have all things in full supply and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things sent from you, an odor of a sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God. And my God

o 1 Tim.6.6, 8.
p 2 Cor. 12. 10.
q 2 Cor. 12. 14.

have the joy of learning what was his personal experience in the things through which he passed. It is suited to this that he has to speak of, or at least to intimate, a real necessity in which he has been, so that he can rejoice about their thinking of him again; that is, as far as their present ministry might indicate that, but he can credit his Philippians with having thought of him indeed when they had lacked opportunity to carry out what was in their hearts. It was not his privation, whatever that might have been, that he would speak of. He had found with regard to that, in whatever circumstances he was, a perfect content. He knew how to be abased on the one hand. He knew (what is more difficult, no doubt,) how to abound on the other. He knew what it was to be in prosperity, as men speak, as well as in adversity,—how to be master of himself in both. He had learned as a disciple, had been initiated into the secret of how to be full and to be hungry, how to abound and to suffer need, *everywhere and in all things.* Here is a blessed experience indeed. He does not stop here without showing to us the source of this contentment and this peace which were always his. It was Christ who gave him the strength. No wonder, then, that it was ability for all things. This is, in fact, the jubilant summing up from the side of experience. How good it is to have it from one so well able to give it! It is plain that, personal as the need and the trial have been, what he seeks here is to give Christ the glory of that perfect competence which he had found in Him.

4. He will not, on this account, make light of that which ministered to his need, and was the manifestation of the Philippians' love and care for himself. He recognizes how well they have done, not simply at the present time, but from the beginning. At the beginning of the gospel, they were, in fact, alone in their communication with him then. They had sent and sent again for his need in Thessalonica. His heart rejoices, not in his having received such things as he plainly says, but to have such fruit in them, abounding to that account which, by and by, is to be fully given. He was now fully supplied. He was now, as he says, "abounding." A very little would, in fact, make one like this abound as to his temporal needs. He had received the things sent from them through Epaphroditus, "an odor," as he says, "of a sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God." No doubt it was that; not merely a little out of abundance, but a ministry which cost them something; and which yet, after all, in itself, one may surely say, repaid them abundantly above all costs. So it is ever, and must be, with the gracious God we have. If there is an odor of a sweet savor to God in that which is done, there will be something

shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ [r]Jesus. Now, unto our God and Father be glory to the ages of ages, Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me salute you. All the saints salute you, and specially those of Cæsar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. [Amen.*]

r Eph. 3. 16.

* Some omit.

corresponding to it in the souls of those who have in this way offered what is agreeable to Him.

He could speak himself, therefore, for God with regard to them. His God, the God he knew so well, would abundantly supply all their need. How far? "According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." We must take that into account if we are to realize the character of this abundant supply. We may make great mistakes otherwise, and plainly there is no straitness with Him at any time. If we speak of straitness, after all, God is abundant in His love, as He is abundant in the riches that He delights to minister. "To Him," he says, our God and Father, "be glory through the ages of ages." He closes with brief salutations, mentioning, amid the general salutation of the saints at Rome, those specially of Cæsar's household, manifestly in a difficult place these for disciples of Christ, and beautiful it is to see that they can be prominent in this way in their salutations of Christ's people elsewhere.

The apostle closes with what is in one way or other the close in all of them: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

THE SECOND DIVISION OF PAUL'S EPISTLES

TREATS of associative or collective relationships of the people of God. Here the Thessalonian epistles, the earliest of all, and simplest, begin with the thought of an assembly in God the Father, a term nowhere else used, but which clearly points to the life they have in Him. This life is manifested in the faith, and love and hope which characterize and make known the children of God; born of the Word of the gospel, coming in the power of the Spirit. The character of the instruments used of God in this testimony is seen, and that the hope of the Christian is in the coming of the Lord, which is dwelt upon, and in the second epistle connected with the apostasy foreseen in the last days,—the development of the mystery of lawlessness already working.

Corinthians then in two more epistles shows us the Church as the body of Christ, and the temple of God, indwelt of the Spirit. Sharply precisionized as it is, there is no need at present of going more fully into it. The teaching of the second epistle is, as always, supplementary to the first; ministry, a fundamental need in connection with every member of the body, being the great theme of it.

Hebrews, in the third place, brings us into the sanctuary, as a holy priesthood, through the rent veil, Christ having gone in before for us in the value of His finished work, having obtained eternal redemption. This epistle, which some would set aside from the number of Paul's, is here seen plainly to fill its place, numerically, and in the development of doctrine which the series presents. It is the Ephesians of this second division, and no other could possibly be substituted for it.

Timotheus means "one who honors God;" and the two epistles addressed to him correspond with this in the most complete manner. Godliness is their keynote; and the Church is seen in them as the house of God, to be governed, therefore, according to that holiness which becomes it, and in the maintenance of the truth without which holiness is impossible. The establishment of elders and deacons is for the furtherance of this. In the second epistle, as in that to the Thessalonians, we see the incoming of evil, of which the first warns us; and then there is need to purge oneself from the vessels to dishonor in

the "great house" of Christendom, and follow righteousness, faith, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. These two epistles, coming in the fourth place, show us the test, and failure under test, of the responsible witness for God upon the earth, and that without a good conscience being maintained the faith cannot be saved from shipwreck (1 Tim. i. 19).

Titus, therefore, the Deuteronomy of this series, teaches the necessary joining of these things together. The truth is according to godliness; all doctrine, when received into the heart, has in it a spiritual power which fashions the life and ways. The grace of God, which brings salvation, is really that which effectually teaches to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for Him who has died to redeem us from all iniquity, which, as we see, was already too sadly prevalent among professing Christians; all the more was it to be resisted and rebuked.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

THE epistles to the Thessalonians are, as already said, distinguished from all others by the style of their address "to the assembly of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father." Of the assembly as the body of Christ there is no mention; a thought with which that of an assembly of *Thessalonians* would be incongruous. They are addressed as possessors of divine life, which is manifested in them by their faith and love and hope, wrought in them by the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and which declares their election. This is especially dwelt upon in the first epistle, though referred to more briefly in the second. The character of the witness through whom God gives this effective testimony is dwelt on also; and the heathen themselves are witnesses of the effect, in their being turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, their Deliverer from the coming wrath. They had a new King, people said, one Jesus. How new a thing indeed to those whose gods might inspire fear, but in the vices they exhibited, neither love nor respect! Here now was a King indeed, and a people who could justify their loyalty as none else could,—a King with a crown of thorns, and a Saviour! Faith, love, and hope found their centre thus in Him; their future was but His coming, and so both epistles, though in different aspects, contemplate it. The large place it has is fully accounted for: it was part of the Christian character, as given by Christ Himself when on earth, "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

The divisions of the epistle are:

1. (Chap. i.): The Word in power introducing to the true and living God as Father, and putting under the authority of Christ as Lord.
2. (Chap. ii.–iv. 12): The witness in which God bears witness.
3. (Chap. iv. 13–v. 11): The new revelation of the resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord.
4. (Chap. v. 12–28): Ways accordant.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE

THESSALONIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

The Word in power introducing to the true and living God, the Father, and putting under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 (1-4): Elect of God, as known in the life lived.

1. PAUL and [a]Silvanus and [b]Timotheus to the assembly of the Thessalonians in God the [c]Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace [from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ].* We give thanks to God always for you [d]all, making mention of you in our prayers; [e]remembering without

*Wanting in some of the most ancient MSS., and in the Vulgate and Syriac versions.

a 2 Cor. 1. 19. 2 Thess. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 12.
b 2 Cor. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. 2 Thess. 1. 1.
c 2 Thess. 1. 1.
d Rom. 1. 8. Eph. 1. 16. Phile. 4.
e ch. 2. 13.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

As THIS epistle is the first of those written by the apostle, at least of those in the wisdom of God come down to us, so it is in regard to doctrine the simplest. There is, in fact, little formal statement of doctrine at all. Though these underlie the whole, there is no mention of eternal life, of new birth, nor even of relationship of children to the Father. There is no difficulty in finding all this in it, but it must be by the aid of other scriptures.

1. Paul joins with himself, after his manner, those who had labored with him in the work among those he is addressing. He addresses the Thessalonians, as has been before remarked, in a different way from any other assembly. He does not speak of them as the assembly of God in Thessalonica, but as the assembly of Thessalonians, rather a company, one may say, than a body; and "in God the Father," a company of children who have received life from Him. Thus to the Athenians the apostle had declared that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" and adds in quotation from one of their own poets, "For we are also His offspring." There is certainly a great difference between what the apostle states as true of all men, and what he here clearly ascribes to a Christian assembly as such. For however Paul might make use of man's place in creation to rebuke the folly and degradation of idolatry, he certainly would be one of the last to forget or ignore the fact that sin had come in and caused him to forfeit his natural right to claim this place; so that when the Jews would have done so with the Lord, He answered, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me." But these very words show that for the Thessalonians this original right had been recovered.

Yet we must make no mistake. The original place is but the feeble image of what is now the Christian's. The salvation of God has not simply set us back where we were before. Had it been our own work, that might indeed have been all that could be thought of; but it is the work of Christ, with all the value of His Person, His sufferings and death attaching to it. As the fruit of this, a new creation starts into being, and Christ as the last Adam has all things put into His hands, to renew after another and more glorious fashion all the promise of the first Paradise in the "paradise of God."

ceasing your work of [f]faith and labor of [g]love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ before our God and Father, knowing, brethren beloved of God, [h]your election.

2 (5-7): The effect of the word of God, and the Spirit acting in it.

2. For our gospel came not unto you in word only but in power and in the Holy [i]Spirit and in much [j]assurance; even as ye know what sort of persons we were among you for your [k]sakes. And ye became imitators

[f] Gal. 5. 6. 2 Thess. 1. 11.
[g] Heb. 6. 10.
[h] Col. 3. 12. 2 Thess. 2. 13.
[i] 1 Pet. 1.22, 23.
[j] Col. 2. 2.
[k] ch. 2. 5,10, 11.

Thus appended to "in God the Father" we have here "in the Lord Jesus Christ;" for this is how a way into the family of God has been regained for us, —we are "alive unto God in Christ Jesus." As we were in Adam by virtue of the life received from him, so are we in the new Adam by a life we have received; only a life so much higher, as Christ is higher than our first father, and we are born of the Spirit, so as to be partakers of the divine nature, Christ becoming the "First-born among many brethren."

This prepares the way for what the apostle goes on with satisfaction of heart to dwell upon, the result in these Thessalonians of the new life they have received. The faith and love and hope manifested in them were its evidence; for which he continually thanked God. These things were not merely a profession, but living realities. Their work was a work of faith: its motives were in the unseen, in heaven where God dwelt, not unknown, but known in Christ, all being in the light of that light. Nor was it a cold illumination: love found here its objects, and made this work an energetic "labor." Hope yet was needed; for love itself would cease to labor, if once it were clear that there could be no result; and with the Thessalonians hope gave persistence to their labor of love. All was recognized and accepted with that Divine Father, before whom they acted (Matt. vi. 1, 6, 18); and the apostle realized in it their election in the love of Him who is love. Their life thus bore witness for them, but of a grace through which they had received life. All was of God, who of His own good pleasure had begotten them to Himself.

2. The apostle recalls to their minds how these things had been wrought in them. It was the gospel which had been the fruitful seed of this bountiful harvest,—a seed having life in it: a gospel, or "good news," the testimony to His love from whom it came, winning the heart that believed the message; for "we love Him who first loved us," says the apostle (1 John iv. 19). Man has turned his back on God, having lent his ear to the devil; and the voice of recall must be a gospel that shall undo the work of Satan, while at the same time it reveals man to himself, and so humbles him in repentance before God. The Cross does both things. If it was the Son of God who hung there, for what did He hang? Was there no need for it? Nay, "the Son of man *must* be lifted up." This is at once the remedy provided for man, and his conviction as one needing such a remedy. And who, one might ask, can resist the tender appeal of such an argument? If the Son of God is to endure the penalty, can it be more than absolute righteousness requires? Can it be a harsh estimate on the part of Him who gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins? Thus expiation and reconciliation are found together in the Cross: God is not against, but for us, in an infinite love, the only measure of which is an infinite sacrifice. Shall we not henceforth listen believingly, obediently, to Him whose whole heart has been told out in a way no human heart could have conceived, and which now surpasses human power to comprehend it as it is?

Yet even the gospel cannot work its way with man by all its competence to meet his spiritual need, nor by its display of divine goodness: "Our gospel," says the apostle, "came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." Power there is not to change men's hearts apart from the work of the Spirit of God; but thus also is the divine work, spite of the inherent weakness of him who might be the subject of it,

of us and of the [l]Lord, having received the word in much [m]affliction with joy of the Holy [n]Spirit, so that ye became patterns to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

3 (8-10): The Word thus published abroad.

3. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place, your faith which is toward God hath come [o]abroad, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entrance we had to you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from [p]heaven, whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus, who delivered us from the coming [q]wrath.

l 1 Cor. 11.1. Phil. 3. 17. 2 Thess. 3 9.
m Acts 17.5.
n Heb. 10.34.
o Rom. 1. 8.
p Phil. 3.20. Tit. 2. 13.
q Rom. 5. 9. ch. 5. 9.

stable through all trial, and above all adverse influences. Father, Son, and Spirit are all, indeed, thus united to effect the salvation of the poor and sinful sons of men, though only faith may be able to realize, under the veil of the natural, the Presence of Him to whom all nature is obedient.

In making known His gospel God is pleased to use, not the tongues of angels, but those of men, recipients themselves of the same grace; who can give testimony with their lives as with their lips. Upon this the apostle lays great emphasis: "even as ye know what sort of persons we were among you for your sakes." This had had its part in making the Thessalonians what they were: "and ye became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." Thus the work makes known the workman; while it is just as true that the more the workman is with God, the less of himself there will be in it. "Ye are our epistle," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us; written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). And this is what makes the "imitation" of such workmen to be safe and right; for there is this qualification always in it, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" as here—"imitators of us and of the Lord." How good to be able to have a well-grounded confidence that these two things are one! The effect is manifest: "read and known of all men," is said of the Corinthians; and here the report went all abroad of these who had turned to God from idols,—to serve the living and true God. But beyond this, such was the freshness among these Thessalonians that they "became patterns to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia."

3. Thus the word of the Lord is published all around; the new life emphasizes the new doctrine from which it proceeded. "Blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," they shone as "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." The life and the word of life give fittingly their evidence together, and not otherwise; though Christ is the "Faithful Witness" when His people fail. The Thessalonians did not fail, but spoke out in such a way that those who had labored among them had no need to say anything with regard to their work. That which they were saying was sufficiently surprising: not only that there was one living and true God, in contrast with the idol-nothings of heathenism, and true service loyally given to Him, but that also the Son of God was coming in the clouds of heaven to inflict judgment for the sins of men. For Him they waited, but not in fear, though they themselves were sinners. On the contrary, they looked for Him with joy and thankfulness, as One who had come on earth to deliver them from the wrath to come, which all must meet who have not taken refuge in Him. Redemption, salvation became in this way the key-words of a new song, which those who knew it could sing in the midst of whatever difficulties, and in the face of whatever enemies.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii.–iv. 12.)

The witness in which God bears witness.

1 (1-12): Its singleness of heart and sincerity.

1. FOR yourselves know, brethren, our entering in which we had to you, that it hath not been in vain; but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at [r]Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of [s]God in much conflict. For our exhortation was [t]not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but [u]God who proveth our hearts. For neither at any time came we among you with flattering [v]words, as ye know, nor with a cloak of [w]covetousness, God is witness, neither seeking glory from men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have been burdensome as apostles of [x]Christ. But we were [y]gentle in the midst of you, as it were a nurse cherishing her own children; so yearning over you, we would have found our delight in imparting to you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, because ye became beloved by us. For ye remember,

r Acts 16.22, 23.
s Acts 17. 2.
t 2 Cor. 7. 2.
u Gal. 1. 10.
v Job. 32.22.
w Acts 20. 33. 2 Cor. 8. 20.
x 2 Cor. 11. 9.
y 2 Tim. 2. 24.

Div. 2.

The second division shows us by the example of the apostle himself, and those who with him had been laboring among them, the character of the instruments with which God works. He may, of course, overrule in any case, and bless the word of truth even from ungodly lips; and so Paul could rejoice if Christ were preached, even though it were of envy and strife. One's responsibility to the truth is because it *is* the truth. So that in any question as to this we may dismiss the speaker from our thoughts. Nay, were the speaker, as fully as Paul was, the minister of Christ, he would all the more recognize the very real danger of one receiving the Word as sanctioned by, rather than sanctioning, the utterer of it. For indeed how common a thing is it, thus to make the word of man of what is even owned to be the word of God! The true effect of it is in this way lost for the soul; and as this may be with the truth as a whole, so that the result is mere orthodoxy—a Christianity of only human making,—so it may be with regard to every separate truth—each item of the wondrous whole. How jealous need we to be over ourselves in these things.

Here, however, the apostle is dwelling upon the truth which is thus perverted, but which is no less the truth because of its perversion. The God of holiness is holy in His ways; and His instruments must be suited to this in character. The truth itself is holy; and those who make it known must do so in the effect manifested in their own lives and ways. And Satan, the great opposer of truth, shows his perfect knowledge of this when, as Paul says, he is transformed for his purpose into an angel of light. "Therefore," he goes on to say, "it is no small thing if also his ministers be transformed as the ministers of righteousness:" even he recognizes the need of suitability morally of end and ways.

1. He can appeal to what himself and his fellow-laborers were, as they went in and out amongst them. The main insistance is upon their manifest unselfishness. They had come from scourging and imprisonment at Philippi; and with the consciousness, as the apostle says elsewhere, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited them. Certainly it was not their own things that they could find or seek, in pursuing a course which involved such things for them. Yet

brethren, our labor and toil: night and day [z] working so as not to burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God, how piously, and righteously, and blamelessly we behaved ourselves toward you who believed, as ye know how, as a father his own children, we used to exhort each of you, and comfort, and testify that ye should [a] walk worthy of God, who [b] calleth you to his own kingdom and glory.

2 (ii. 13–iii. 13): The imitation and the opposition; in which faith is still confirmed.

2. And for this cause, we also thank God without ceasing, that when ye received from us the word of the report of God, ye learned it [c] not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God, which worketh also in you who believe. For ye became imitators, brethren, of the assemblies of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen as they also of the Jews, who both slew the Lord Jesus, and the [d] prophets, and have driven us out; and they please not God and are contrary to all men, [e] forbidding us to speak unto the nations, that they might be saved, [f] that they might fill up their sins always: and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. But we, brethren, having been bereaved of you for a little moment, [g] in person, not in heart, have been more abundantly [h] diligent to see your face with much desire; on account of which we were [i] desirous to come to you, even I Paul, once and again, and Satan hindered us. [j] For what is our hope or joy or crown of glorying? Are not ye also before our Lord Jesus at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.

[z] Acts 20.34.

[a] *cf.* Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10. Phil. 1. 27.
[b] 2 Thess. 2. 14.
[c] Matt. 10. 40. Gal. 4. 4.
[d] Matt. 5. 12. Matt. 23. 34, 37. Luk. 13. 33, 34. Acts 7. 52.
[e] Acts 13. 50. Acts 14. 5, 19. Acts 17. 5, 13. Acts 18. 12. Acts 19. 9. Acts 22. 21, 22.
[f] Rom. 11. 31.
[g] 1 Cor. 5. 3. Col. 2. 5.
[h] ch. 3. 10.
[i] Rom. 1. 13.
[j] 2 Cor. 1. 14. Phil. 2. 16. Phil. 4. 1.

they did steadfastly pursue it. As bold as ever in their confidence in God, they made known still, amid much affliction, what was none the less God's good news of joy. They had modified nothing, they had used no flattery, they had sought to please God, not man; Him whose omniscience searched the hearts of those who had to do with Him. From men they had sought nothing—had not insisted on undoubted rights—but found delight in giving what they had to give, yea, and their own souls with it. It was not simply righteousness, but love that sought not its own, and in which they labored, enforcing all their precept by example. And this that the recipients of the gospel might walk worthy of the God declared in it, who was calling men to His own Kingdom and glory.

2. They had not been disappointed at the result among the Thessalonians. The word of God had been received by them as what indeed it was, and, so received, it wrought its divine work. It took them out of their natural place in a world fallen away from God, to make them companions of those rejected by the world, but of whom the world was not worthy. Thus, says the apostle, "ye became imitators of the assemblies of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they of the Jews." Nor need they think this strange who were followers of the Crucified One. Israel, alas! the first in privilege among the nations, had only by this become the guiltiest of all. The Lord Jesus Himself was among them the Head of a long line of martyrs, the prophets, of whom Stephen asks, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain

Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone, and [k]sent Timotheus, our brother and fellow-worker under God* in the gospel of Christ, to confirm you and encourage you concerning your faith; that no man be moved [l]by these afflictions; for yourselves know that [m]hereunto we were appointed; for also when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction, as also it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent in order to know your faith, lest in any way the [n]tempter had tempted you and our labor should be in vain. But [o]when Timotheus came just now to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that ye have always good remembrance of us, longing to see us, even as we also you; for this cause, brethren, we have been comforted about you in our distress and affliction through your faith: for now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we rejoice on your account before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and [p]perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

k Acts 17.15.
l Eph. 3. 13.
m Jno. 15. 20. Jno. 16. 33.
n 2 Cor.11.3.
o Acts 18. 1, 5.
p Rom.1.11.

* Or, "minister of God;" the MSS. vary.

them who showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers." Thus the nation chosen out of the world for the blessing of the world became the great opposers and hinderers of blessing. "They please not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the nations, that they might be saved." Israel are, therefore, for the present, rejected and set aside; they have filled up the measure of their sins, and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Such was God's heart towards the Gentiles; of which they, His laborers in the gospel, were witnesses and exponents. Bereaved of them for a moment, and having to leave them in the midst of a contrary world, their hearts unchangeably were with them, and desiring to come to them again; yea, Paul himself did, as he assures them; having been hindered, not by lack of heart, but by the great adversary of Christ and His people. And in the meantime he might seem thus to prevail; but faith contemplated another scene when the evil with which we are now in conflict shall have been put down, and, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself at His coming, these now afflicted and despised Thessalonians would become indeed, what already faith held them for, the glory and joy of those of whom they were the fruit of love's sweet labor.

Paul proceeds to show how far from indifferent he had been with regard to the afflictions they had been passing through. These had been foretold them from the first, so that they might not be taken by them unawares; nevertheless he could not leave them to the actual experience of them—so different from the looking forward merely to what had not yet come—without seeking to minister to the need which he, acquainted with suffering of this kind, knew so well. Timothy, therefore, had been sent to confirm their faith; and his return with the news of their constancy had filled with joy and comfort the apostle's heart. "For now," he says, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." It is evident that here is the soul of the true worker manifest, and that this is the object throughout this part of the epistle, to show as illustrated by experience the instruments

But our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you, and the Lord make you to [q]increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all men, even as we also toward you; to the end he [r]may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, [s]at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

3 (1v. 1-12): Their sanctification pressed.

3. For the rest, then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you, in the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received from us how ye ought to walk and please God, even as also ye do walk, [t]that ye would abound still more. For ye know what charges we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor; not in passionate lust, even as the Gentiles [u]who know not God; that no man overreach and defraud his brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, even as we also told you before and fully testified. For God hath not called us for uncleanness, but in sanctification. He, therefore, that in this disregardeth, [v]disregardeth not man but God, [w]who hath also given unto you his Holy Spirit. Now, concerning brotherly love, ye have no

q ch. 4. 10.

r 1 Cor. 1. 8. ch. 5. 23.

s 2 Thess. 1. 10.

t Col. 1. 10.

u Eph. 4.18.

v 1 Jno.4.20.

w Eph. 4.30.

by which God works in His spiritual harvest-fields. There is no need to dwell upon it, by reason of its being so plain; while the lesson conveyed is of the utmost importance. The apostle uses the most forcible expressions to declare the thorough identification of his heart with them in all their joy and sorrow,—his realization of, and longing in regard to their need, which expressed itself in constant and earnest supplication to God that he might again be with them, and that they might have spiritual increase and establishment in holiness such as might meet approval, in the day of approval, at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints.

3. He passes hereupon into exhortation. Never satisfied with any attainment, he urges upon them still more to abound in that which would please God. Two things he presses; the one complementary to the other: abstention from lust, and abounding in love. The one was even a part of the religion of the heathen; as, in the broader sense of it, it was that out of which sprang idolatry, and through which comes the corruption of the world. In the narrower and grosser sense it was indulged in the very temples of their gods. It is a proof of the moral atmosphere in which they had been brought up, that to Christians so commended as are those here it should be necessary to warn them against the gross immoralities which, however, we find later invading Corinth. For us all, moreover, it is written, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We must not, therefore, pass lightly over what is left for our instruction also in the never-failing wisdom of One who knows the hearts of men.

But the remedy is also here, love which is the opposite of lust: the one the dominance and tyranny of self; the other that which seeketh not its own,—the spirit of service and self-denial. True, it is the love of brethren that the apostle here exhorts to, and not love in its universal aspect; but although these are separable, they will not be found, in fact, separate. The love to one another, which Paul reminds them they have been taught of God, cannot exist without flowing out to those who still are what we all once were, when divine grace met and brought us into the circle in which alone God's love can reflect itself, as

need that we write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God [x] to love one another. For indeed ye do this towards all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound still more, and that ye study to be quiet and [y] to do your own business, and work with your own hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk honorably towards those that are without and may have need of no one.*

[x] Jno. 15.17.

[y] 2 Thess.3. 12.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv. 13–v. 11.)

The resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord.

1 (iv.13-18): Dead and living in one company.

1. NOW we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those that are fallen asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as the rest also who [z] have no hope.

[z] Eph. 2. 12.

* Or, "nothing."

being enjoyed. Here the satisfied heart finds deliverance from the lusts of other things, covets but what is its own, and what is secured to it, and that which drives out lust puts in love in its place, to hold the citadel. Love is the bond of perfectness, the active energy of the divine life in the saint, and victorious in every field of conflict. The quiet occupation with one's own work, and the maintenance by this means of a proper and healthful independence of others, naturally unite with such a care for others as love ensures.

Div. 3.

The Christian hope is prominent in this epistle from the first. The Thessalonians had been converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and this became the light for them upon a path which ended in the glory already revealed. Important it surely was that there should be no cloud upon the prospect thus before them in which the opened heavens claimed them constantly; while for the earth also was seen the end of Satan's power and of the curse, and the regeneration of the earth itself. What power for sanctification this, which made of those possessing such a hope pilgrims indeed; encompassing them continually with the atmosphere and light of heaven and the world to come!

For the Thessalonians, however, there was in fact a cloud which shadowed this glorious expectation; and the apostle proceeds to dispel it by the announcement of a new "word of the Lord," a new revelation, which declares the participation in it of the dead, for whom they were sorrowing as cut off from that which was the hope of the living. On the contrary he shows that the dead will be raised up to share with the living all that was before them. There would be no division of this sort between those alike the people of Christ. And he goes on to remind them that they were not to be (as Israel rightly will be) calculating times and seasons, which would have their place in connection with the day of the Lord, yet to come upon the world as a thief in the night. For the children of the day, suddenly as it might come, it could be no such unwelcome surprise. Let them not, therefore, sleep as others, but clothe themselves with the light as with an armor which would be their defence in a hostile place; assuring themselves that, whether living or dying, they were alike to live with their Saviour-Lord.

1. The apostle does not reprove them for the want of knowledge which they had; and which, if not inevitable, yet at least was not to be wondered at. There was, in fact, as his speaking by the word of the Lord implies, as yet no definite statement of Scripture with regard to that which troubled these young disciples. The opposite has indeed been asserted; and the phrase itself even taken as a

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who have been [a]laid asleep by Jesus,* will [b]God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the [c]word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are

[a] Rev. 1.18.
[b] 1 Cor. 15. 23.
[c] 1 Kin. 13. 17, 18. 1 Kin.20.35.

* Or, "have fallen asleep through Jesus."

direct appeal to Scripture. But he does not produce any scripture; nor, had he done so, would it seem like Paul to affirm his speaking by it after this manner. The sufficient answer is, however, that no passage has been brought forward which could justify this view; and we may be confident none can be brought forward. The texts which have been referred to (Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 1 sq.; Luke xiv. 14; John v. 28 sq.) are wholly incompetent; so that others have been obliged to imagine an unwritten word of the Lord which had come to Paul's ears; but why not, then, a fresh communication from the Lord in glory, such as we know he received on other subjects, and others also beside himself received? True it is, indeed, that one might well believe, apart from any positive statement, that the Lord would not, in the way they feared, leave any of His own in the day of His manifestation under the power of that death which He had Himself passed through,—deprived, not by any fault of their own, of the full participation in the glory which that death of His had entitled them to. The lack of assurance in this respect on the part of the Thessalonians may well show us our dulness in spiritual things. Yet for this the Lord has now made special provision. It is like Him, and we have all of us cause to be thankful for it. No! "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who have fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him."

Let us notice a little exactly the expressions here: for we may be assured that they are themselves exact, as always in Scripture. "*Jesus* died;" His saints but "fall asleep." With Him indeed it was *death*, and in all its reality and severity as the judgment upon sin,—the sign and type of a deeper judgment. With them it is but "sleep,"—rest and refreshment, from which they rise to a day that knows no ending and suffers no decline,—a rest too, but in the full activity of life, where life is never dormant, but the joy of the Lord is strength indeed.

For, if Jesus died, He rose again; and this is what gives His death itself its full power in blessing for our souls. Thus the apostle puts the two together, as the full argument of faith as to its portion from God. It is *God* who raised up Jesus again. He has answered the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" by putting the Sufferer where all the meaning of His death can now come out. Righteousness sorrowing gave Him up to die; but righteousness joyfully raises Him from the dead. Had He suffered on His own account, He could not have come out of it; His coming out is the testimony of personal righteousness in Himself, and thus of a work done for others, and of its acceptance also in their behalf. He rises their Representative, even as He died their Substitute; and the honors so acquired He, whose wealth could not be increased, acquired as treasure that He could pour out upon them. Thus His resurrection is full argument for their own; and if God bring Him again into the world, they too shall come with Him; *God* shall bring them with Him. In the day of His manifestation all must do Him honor: so He comes in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels; and how shall the dominion of death which He has broken keep from Him those who show the value of the work which has set it aside?

The apostle here announces only the truth concerning those on whose account they are bearing so needless a burden of sorrow. "God shall bring them with Him,"—His own, from whom He cannot needlessly be separated. Not, as some strangely imagine, bring them as spirits to rejoin the bodies left behind on earth: it is merely the simple and blessed fact, that they will not be wanting in the company that God brings with His Son. Then he goes on to explain how it shall be, and brings in here the assurance of their previous resurrection.

left unto the coming of the Lord, [d]are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep. Because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with [e]the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise

[d] 1 Cor. 15. 52.

[e] 1 Cor. 15. 52.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep. Because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

Thus we can realize the tenderness of the expression, "those who have fallen asleep through Jesus," or I think, better "those who have been laid asleep by Jesus,"—by Him who has the keys of death and hades, and their Saviour. Taken in the first way, the meaning would be that "through Jesus,"—through His work for them,—death had become to them merely a sleep; but it would seem a strange manner of expressing this. Taken in the second way, the Lord's rule over death and His tender care of His people are both implied.

To us, for whom the great body of Christians are already among the dead, it cannot be a question that those remaining to the coming of the Lord will not precede the apostles and the multitude of the departed in their entrance into glory; yet, for all that, how little is the significance of this rising "first" of the dead in Christ realized by believers still. The common thought (thank God, less common than it was) of a single day of judgment in which saints and sinners rise together, necessarily destroys it entirely. Here a resurrection of the dead is shown to take place before the living saints are changed even; and then both are caught away together, to meet the Lord in the air. When He appears, therefore, they appear with Him (Col. iii. 4). Here is no promiscuous crowd, clearly: "they that are ready go in with Him to the marriage and the door is shut." There is no need for our present purpose to consider what or where this marriage is. This consideration belongs elsewhere, and is to be found where it belongs (Matt. xxv. 1 sq., notes); but we see at once that here is the company from which the Thessalonians thought their dying brethren might be excluded. It is not the dead who wait and watch with their lamps trimmed and burning; and they are in fact left out of the picture that our Lord has given us there. The apostle, speaking by the word of the Lord, now adds them to the company of those who thus go forth. As with the living so with the dead, they are not the whole number of those dead, but, as the apostle elsewhere says, "they that are *Christ's* at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). Those who compose this company are distinctly specified: they are, according to the language of the epistle to the Philippians, the "*out*-resurrection from among the dead" (Phil. iii. 11).

Scripture is a perfectly consistent whole; and the faithfulness and love of God shine out in it. Christians may lose sight of what they are to Christ, but it is impossible for Him to deny Himself. They can mingle themselves with the world; but He who has redeemed them out of it can never mingle them. They will come with Him to the judgment of the world—not be judged with it by Him; and this is what the doctrine of the "resurrection from among the dead" decisively bears witness to. But all the details and manner of it are in full harmony with this. Even the prodigal, according to the Lord's own picture, must be met outside the father's house, with the father's arms; and where it is the gathering of Christians finally to their Lord, the "Lord Himself" must come to claim them: "the Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout of command," as in supreme authority. This, although question has been made of it, is His own voice; and thus the "voice of the archangel" follows and

first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be *f* ever with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

2 (v. 1-11): In the darkness and in the light.

2. But of the *g* times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that anything should be written to you. For

f Jno. 14. 3.

g Acts 1. 7.

is distinguished from it. The highest among angels—those "ministers of His that do His pleasure,"— in sympathetic obedience gives the word (as it would seem) to the angelic host, and the trump of God sounds. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we" (the living) "shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52). Thus the trumpet here is no call to battle, as some have thought it, but answers to the call of the assembly, in Num. x. 3, 4. In Matt. xxiv. 31, the Son of man sends His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. This, as has been shown in the consideration of the passage, is the gathering of dispersed Israel. In our present epistle it is rather what would answer to the gathering of the princes (Num. x. 4); for the company gathered is that of those who are to reign with Christ over the earth. The announcement here is exactly as in Corinthians: the dead in Christ rise first; then "we who are alive and remain" are "caught away together with them," —which involves, of course, the change of which Corinthians speaks. We are "caught away in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

It is not perhaps remarkable, and yet we may do well to notice, how throughout this word of comfort that title "Lord" comes in; "the word of the Lord," "the coming of the Lord," "the Lord Himself," "to meet the Lord," "be ever with the Lord." It is, no doubt, the time when His lordship will be manifest to all; and that may seem sufficient reason for it. What a joy it will be beyond expression, to see all power put into the Hands alone competent to wield it! to have every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! But "so shall we be ever with the Lord" sounds somewhat in a different line of thought; and here we perhaps rather expect the sweet familiar "Jesus," His name on earth, but far from excluding the thought of His divine personality. To fulfil the prophecy that He was to be called Emmanuel, He was called Jesus; and that, too, because He would save His people from their sins. It is a name wonderfully complete therefore in what it expresses. Yet in the thought of eternity, as the apostle realizes it in the passage before us, he does not say, we shall be ever with Jesus, nor even, the Lord Jesus, but simply, "for ever with the Lord." Some even seem to deem it too cold and distant a title for heaven; but they can hardly have noticed how it is used by the inspired writers. While, of course, speaking of authority, it is an authority under which they delight to be putting themselves, as it were, continually. With him who, though most free, would ever be known as the "bond-servant of Christ," they are ever proclaiming and exulting in His Lordship. And for those who have realized the bitter bondage of sin, how blessed the deliverance which could only be achieved by the strong hand of this glorious Master. For them this is not the language of distance, but of joyous worship. Released from such authority, to what would they be released? Will eternity make any difference in this respect? Will they need deliverance from that which wrought deliverance for them? The apostle answers that there, when we reach the end which all before has been hastening on to,—"we shall be *ever* with the *Lord*." It is the answer of heart to Him who has come forth "Himself" in joy of heart to meet them, to Him whose own words were, to those fearing soon to be made orphans by His absence, "I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

2. This is, of course, but the coming of the Lord in one aspect: as it bears upon the condition of the sleeping saints. The apostle goes on now to what is

yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord so [h]cometh as a thief in the night. When they may be saying, Peace and safety, [i]then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, breth-

[h] Matt. 24. 43, 44. Luk. 12.39, 40.
[i] Luk. 17.27 -30.

most closely connected with it, but yet not synonymous, as many take it. The "*day* of the Lord" is, in fact, ushered in by the coming of the Lord: it cannot be before Christ has risen from where He is now seated, on the Father's throne, to take that which is His as Son of man. In this character it is that all judgment is committed to Him (John v. 22, 27); and thus it is that as the Son of man He comes in the clouds of heaven and sits upon the throne of His glory. But before He thus appears, He has first of all to gather His associates upon the throne of His Kingdom; and this it is which we have been just looking at. When He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4); and when He reigns we shall reign with Him over the earth. But for this we must be either raised or changed; and more than this, we must "appear," or better, "be manifested," before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10). As to acceptance of our persons, that is already accomplished; we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). Thus, personally, as He Himself has told us, he that has heard His word, and believed on Him who sent Him, shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life (John v. 24). But the appraisal of our works is another thing, and that there shall be this we are as definitely assured. "We shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ." It is the triumph of divine grace that everything can be brought out thus, and we can "give account of ourselves to God," without the least sullying of divine holiness; even under the scrutiny of the light of God, "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). Yet so "shall every one receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The appraisal is for reward; and we receive reward or suffer loss accordingly. This therefore must be settled before His saints can come forth with their Lord, each in his apportioned place according to the judgment of divine holiness, as well as in manifestation of divine grace.

We are to meet the Lord in the air; and then, according to what the tenor of Scripture generally implies, that apportionment of reward takes place. With this also there will necessarily be another thing of incalculable value for the soul,—wisdom gathered for eternity as to sin and holiness, good and evil, and the perfect ways of God's government as to each. What lessons for the judges of the new Kingdom, who have themselves passed under the searching of inflexible holiness before they come to fill that place! How suited that they should do this; and this accounts on the one side for that which perhaps no single text, but the combined force of many prophetic scriptures assures us will be the case, that between the taking away of the saints to meet their Lord and His coming with them in the clouds of heaven there will elapse a considerable time—in fact some years. This is a matter much in dispute even yet among those who have devoted themselves more than others to the study of prophecy. It would be impossible to take it up in any adequate way here; nor is this the place in which to consider it. The full unfolding is in the book of Revelation; while the Lord's own prophecy upon the Mount of Olives, as Matthew has recorded it, is an important link between this and Daniel, the Old Testament revelation. The second epistle here, with its warning as to apostasy from Christianity threatening, and the coming of the man of sin, almost completes the scriptures relating to this subject.

But thus it is plain that the day of the Lord begins for the earth as it may be said, secretly, and is characterized in its beginning by judgment, more and more descending upon a world ripening more and more in its iniquity. The true saints in Christendom being removed to the presence of their Lord, it becomes a mere corrupt mass, lapsing into open and defiant infidelity. And now it is

ren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all [j]sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor of darkness. So, then, let us not [k]sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober; for they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night; but

[j] Eph. 5. 8.

[k] Matt.25.5.

that, the Gentile branches being cut off, (because they abode not in the grace received) the natural branches are to be graffed again into their own olive-tree; this too for final and full blessing to the world at large (Rom. xi. 16–26). A remnant awakened by the Spirit of God to the sense of their national guilt in the rejection of Christ, and purified by the trials through which they pass, in the midst of the apostasy of the mass who receive Antichrist, are prepared for the coming of the Lord, not now into the air, as when He takes away the saints of the present and the past, but to the earth, to judge it. (See the notes on the book of Psalms, *passim*).

It is in connection with Israel that all the Old Testament prophecies find fulfilment; and its history moves in accord with prophecy. For with the blessing of the earthly people comes the blessing of the earth; and when Israel loses her position as a nation, the history of the earth is for the present closed.

The interval has indeed the most wonderful history of all; but it is that of a people called out from the earth—from Israel and from the nations both, and destined for heaven.

Thus it is plain why the apostle says to the Thessalonians here, that of the times and seasons they had no need that he should write to them. In fact, the Lord had at the beginning told His disciples that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, which the Father had placed under His own authority (Acts i. 7). Their question, to which this is an answer, shows that, as we know, the heavenly calling of the Church was yet unrevealed. Even now they might not know all that this involved in the way of separation from Jewish and earthly prophecy; but they knew perfectly well that the day of the Lord was to come as a thief in the night. This was evidently the common Christian knowledge, and made it plain that its coming could not be calculated from Daniel's prophetic periods, for instance. In these, in fact, are found incalculable elements which, until the time comes when they will speak out, will necessarily defeat all attempts at a right estimate. Had it been possible in the apostle's days to predict the centuries of delay that have, in fact, elapsed, disciples might indeed still have waited for their Lord, but *watched* they could not, and no "thief in the night" could have troubled their slumbers. But for the heart expectancy was needed; and they were to watch *because* they knew not. Thus for these watchers the times could not speak; and in fact when they do it will be for another people than the present Christian Church, and when this is already removed to be with the Lord in the manner which we have just had before us.

For mere formal and worldly Christendom, the coming of the thief will then in a sense have taken place. Shut out in the outside darkness, when others have entered the chambers of light, no place of repentance will be left for the despisers of God's present grace. In a world which, having rejected the true King, will be left for that awful time to experience fully what Satan's rule is, they will fall under the power of his deception. Not having received the love of the truth that they might be saved, they will believe a lie; and comforting themselves with the cry of "Peace and safety," sudden destruction will come upon them as upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape!

They have chosen darkness, alas, with the light all round them; and for such the darkness is appointed. Impossible is it for the true Christian to be thus overtaken as a thief. A son of the day, the darkness has no title or claim with regard to him. The night is the period when darkness reigns; but the Christian is not of it,—not of the present "age" at all: it is characterized by a rejected

let us who are of the day be sober, [l]putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath [m]not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we may [n]live together with him. Wherefore, encourage one another and edify one the other, as also ye do.

[l] *cf.* Eph. 6. 14, 16, 17.
[m] ch. 1. 10.
[n] 2 Tim. 2. 11.

Christ, gone from the earth—the Light of the world withdrawn. But the Holy Spirit is come, and the light is restored to faith: faith receives the light from heaven, though the night is unchanged by that; and the sons of light have to be armed against the darkness, which is all around them. Upon those who are in the light it can only come as a spirit of slumber, or as intoxication from the world's siren cup. But in the light itself is the remedy for this; and Christ as apprehended in the soul is its armor of defence from both snare and open assault: faith and love cover the citadel of the heart,—are its breastplate, therefore,—while the hope of salvation (the full deliverance at hand) is as a helmet for the head against all stunning of discouragement. We must brace this armor to us, says the apostle, that we may find its full sufficiency; and the expectation speedily of the Lord's return is cheer indeed, both as to the dead and in the daily conflict of the living: "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him." With this hope we may well encourage one another, as with a hope with which we ourselves are comforted of God. The apostle could, indeed, thank Him as to the Thessalonian Christians, that they were doing this.

Div. 4.

The epistle closes, according to the general manner, with exhortation to practical conduct suited to the place of blessing they enjoyed as partakers of this blessed hope. The doctrine which is according to godliness, as the apostle reminds Titus, must be given practical manifestation in the lives of its professors. And while the Thessalonians were in reality shining examples of the power of Christianity, yet no one of us was ever beyond the need of exhortation. Where the heart is right with God, the details of the life may yet need to be set right. Things may not be in due proportion and balance; and thus one truth may be bulking so large as to interfere with the right appreciation of other truth. Individuality may be stiffened into a false independence, or corporate responsibilities be made to crowd out individuality. And, moreover, while it is true that we are instructed as to principles, rather than governed by a code of laws, yet the plain single precept has its own value and importance,—the principle being thus exemplified in its application, the abstract prevented from becoming merely an abstraction, and brought into the sphere of every-day practice. The exhortation here is brief, and in brief sentences; and much of it requires no exposition, little comment such as suits our purpose now.

1. The apostle begins with urging them to recognize the Lord's working in those who, in the activity of love, were laboring among them. Leaders there surely were and are: those in whom might be discerned, not mere human energy but divine; who were to be followed, therefore, because, and as, they followed Christ. He has no idea of any blind or servile following,—of any recognition of unspiritual men in spiritual place, or invested with power by man where man had none, and God had bestowed none. The responsibility pressed upon them was one which, by the terms expressed, appealed to them as free, spiritual, and responsible, subject to Christ alone, although He may and does have those through whom He works, and whom, so far as they are this, the saints are gladly to recognize, and submit to them. It is the very opposite of a clergy constituted by man. Laboring and taking the lead *in the Lord*, their re-

DIVISION 4. (Chap. v. 12–28.)

Ways accordant.

1 (12, 13): The recognition of leaders.

2 (14–22): Amid various evils the way of right and good.

1. NOW, we beseech you, brethren, to [o]know those who are laboring among you and who take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be in peace among yourselves.

2. And we exhort you, brethren, [p]admonish the disorderly, comfort the faint hearted, [q]sustain the weak,

[o] 1 Cor. 16. 18. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 7, 17.

[p] 2 Thess. 3. 11.

[q] Rom. 15. 1.

sponsibility is to Him, and their authority is of Him wholly; and thus their admonitions have true spiritual weight. As with the word of God itself, admonition will of necessity have large place in their appeals,—leading in a path so unique and separate from all that the natural man craves and follows, and in which the weakness and folly that still cling to us become so painfully apparent. Admonition is thus in an eminent way a service of love; all the more because of the pain that must be in it, when truly this. As Paul says to the Ephesians, that he "ceased not night and day to admonish each one of them with tears" (Acts xx. 31). What need is implied here! and what earnestness to meet it! Well may he exhort the Thessalonians now to esteem such very highly in love for their works' sake. No fitting response could be but love to love.

2. There follow general moral exhortations; at the head of which comes that to peace. It is true that sometimes one must contend: we are to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3); but the apostle is here contemplating no such case; and alas, the strife of self-interest is that which too commonly disturbs the people of God; the sure sign of the allowance of lusts which show that Christ is not the present satisfaction of the soul. Real contention for the faith will be because Christ is before it, as surely as the other betrays His absence. The atmosphere of His presence is indeed peace; but conflict may be needed that that peace may be enjoyed; if it be rebellion that has launched us into it, it is not we who have broken the peace, but those who have made it impossible to retain it without treason to our Lord.

But the peace which is the result of communion will be that which maintains divine order, which is alone consistent with it. Obedience to the will of God is harmony with all around, as sin is discord, none the less but more because of the multitude that swell it. When the concord of human wills against the divine shall seem to be great enough to have conquered a harmony without God and in defiance of Him, then judgment will be at hand, complete and final, and peace will be the effect of established righteousness.

But while the disorderly are to be admonished, it is of importance also to remember those who languish in the strife continually going on between the evil and the good, a strife from which it is impossible to deliver them. The difficulties of life perplex and dismay them. They maintain a feeble and spiritless testimony, which may lapse into more or less compliance with that against which it seems vain to struggle. Here it needs much discernment often to distinguish between weakness and wilfulness; and indeed no strict line can be drawn between conditions of this kind. Weakness is often the cover and excuse for wilfulness; and admonition has constantly more or less to be blended with comfort. For with the abundant provision God has made for us, the wealth of promises, the fulfilment of which is secured by all the unchangeablenesss of Him who has made them,—drafts on heaven's treasury certain to be honored whenever presented,—nothing but unbelief can leave us poverty-stricken as we too often are; and what does unbelief mean but in fact a struggle between our wills and God? Yet the order—"grace and truth"—must be carefully remembered in dealing with cases of this nature. Where there is faint-heartedness, the soul must be revived and steadied by divine grace, in order to be able to act in ac-

be [r]patient towards all. [s]See that no one render to any evil for evil, but pursue always that which is good towards one another and towards all; [t]rejoice always; [u]pray without ceasing; [v]in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus as to you; [w]quench

r Col. 3. 12.
s Rom. 12. 17.
t Phil. 4. 4.
u Luk. 18.1. Rom.12.12. Eph. 6. 18.
v Eph. 5.20.
Col. 3. 17. w *cf.* 1 Tim. 4. 14.

cordance with divine principles. Yet here also no separation between these two can be maintained: grace is no grace apart from truth, and will never consent to separation; while, God being what He is, truth without grace could not be even truth, in any proper presentation of it.

"Comfort the faint-hearted, sustain the weak," implies, therefore, a difference between these which is quite intelligible. Real weakness there may be, where there is not faint-heartedness. There may be no tendency to give way to the pressure of circumstances or of evil, and yet weakness which claims the ministry of sympathetic love. "Be patient towards all" reminds us of how we all are (alas, how much!) the cause of trial to one another. All the more because we are brought so closely together, and the spiritual tie that unites us for eternity gives a seriousness to everything that forgets and ignores it. Yet, failing as we all are, how should the apprehension of this make us tender as to the faults of another; especially when we realize, as we are often made to do, how prone we are to misjudge,—how easily we find the mote in our brother's eye, while in fact a distorting "beam" is in our own. The exercise of patience is thus as much in our own interest as in our brother's; and patience becomes a matter of justice quite as much as of mercy.

Even if there be plain evil, good is that which alone will overcome it; in any case we are not to return evil for it, but to pursue always what is good; and that not only towards one another, but towards all. We are not permitted in such things to have one rule of conduct towards those inside and another towards those outside the Christian circle. We are not to have one face in the Church and another in the world. The love of God goes out to the world; and with the reflection of that divine love we are to love it too; all the more because we know the real and immense distance which the grace of God has made between us, and the certainty that as to those who remain in it, eternity will only confirm and increase that distance. Of that love of God from which they must break away to share the portion of the devil and his angels, we have the happiness and the responsibility of being representatives.

But for all this we need strength; and the "joy of the Lord is strength." It being the joy of the Lord, and Christ being always that, the result must be that we are privileged and under obligation to rejoice always. There is not a moment in which He is not Master, and in which all circumstances are not perfectly under His control. We, as it were, uncrown Him therefore, if we do not rejoice. That we are completely dependent on Him is nothing to be deducted from the blessedness of this, whatever it imply as to weakness on our own part. The unceasing prayer to which the apostle here eujoins us is, of course, the confession of this; but if the expression of need, it is no less the expression of faith in Him, the incense of whose acceptability is in our prayers; so that in everything we can be bidden to give thanks also, as what is the will of God in Christ Jesus regarding us. The abundant provision that we have in Him—the perfect assurance of omnipotent love—shows indeed what He would have, who has given Christ for us. Can there be in this sunshine a fleck of inconsistency or mutability at all? There can be but one answer; and in this sense also we are "filled into all the fulness of God." Thus joy and thanksgiving are the fitting accompaniments with which the apostle connects that prayer by which we draw out of the infinite fulness,—the exhortation in which we hear Christ's own voice appealing to us: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The apostle closes this exhortation with one which on the one hand exempli-

not the Spirit; [x]despise not prophecies; but [y]prove all things, hold fast the right, from every form of evil abstain.

[x] 1 Cor. 14. 39.
[y] 1 Cor.2.15. 1 Cor.14.29.

fies the abundance of the provision God has made for us, while on the other, it reminds us, how sadly, of the folly to which we are prone; and that, alas! most of all with regard to His choicest gifts: "Quench not the Spirit," he says, "despise not prophecies."

The thought of *quenching* the Spirit manifestly contemplates the Spirit under the figure of fire; and we cannot but think of Pentecost with its divided tongues of fire, the manifestation in the individual of the heavenly power which had come amongst men, and come to speak with a divine message to all the families of men, divided by sin, and by the judgment upon it. The Gift, and the free giving of God were thus to be manifested by means of gifts bestowed upon those who were themselves recipients of it. But this enlightening of others was in this way a matter of responsibility on the part of those thus gifted: not in fact a limited class among Christians, except indeed as they themselves create the limit, as so many do. Here in fact is one form of quenching the Spirit, when instead of ministering one to another each according to the gift he has received (1 Pet. iv. 10) that which the Spirit has given is ignored, the ministry that love urges to is suppressed, and the Church suffers, deprived of how much of the blessing which might be hers, and of the ability to testify of the grace that she has learned.

Certainly there are special gifts,—"evangelists, pastors and teachers," as the Word declares; but this not to restrain the manifestation of the same Spirit in others; and especially as to prophecy, of which the apostle speaks in this connection here; his own injunction is, "Covet to prophesy;" and his encouragement to it, that "ye may all prophesy" (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 4, 5, 24, 30, 39). This was not necessarily the utterance of predictions, as is too commonly imagined, but that speaking out of the fulness of the Spirit what would be thus the word of God Himself, the "oracle" for His people (1 Pet. iv. 11). This involved, not so much what is ordinarily called "gift," as spirituality—that nearness to God which makes the "man of God," and one to whom He can therefore communicate His mind. But this might be done in the simple quotation of a text of Scripture, or in "five words,"—perhaps more likely so than in a long discourse, but whose testimony would be felt in heart and conscience. The effect on "one that believeth not, or one unlearned," entering in among those so engaged is that "he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). But this overflow of the divine fulness which is in all the saints to-day as much as in apostolic times, is not limited as to time and place, as Philip's daughters who were prophetesses show, who certainly did not prophesy in the assembly. How blessed to know that such fulness is really in us all, and that the apostle urges that it should overflow, the hindrances to this being always in ourselves, the blocking of outlet to an illimitable spring, of which we may be quite or very little conscious. In how many ways may this be done! but if out of the belly there flows *not* the living water, it is certain that there must be some hindrance for which we are responsible, if the Lord's words be the simple, always verifiable words they must be (John vii. 38).

The figure here is not of water, but of fire; and we may quench it in one another or in ourselves. The burning words which seek for utterance may consume us inwardly as finding none; or on another's lips may merely irritate the conscience which is not duly exercised. Prophesying may in either way be despised and the Spirit quenched. What would our assemblies be, if we were delivered from these resistant forces, or even duly exercised about them! if the lethargy too often oppressing us were treated as our common responsibility, and

3 (23-28): Sanctification of spirit, soul and body.

3. Now [z]the God of peace himself [a]sanctify you wholly: [z] Phil. 4. 9. [a] ch. 3. 13.

we heard in our souls the Voice: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

But there is responsibility upon another side; and so the apostle continues: "but prove all things, hold fast the right." Not everything that assumes divine authority for itself can be received as such. The Word must for us try everything,—the written communication be held superior to the prophet's voice: for here, alas, man's frailty and fallibility are to be remembered; while, moreover, we are to take heed, because "many false prophets are gone out into the world." Thus the Christian as a possessor of the truth is held to his responsibility to know and to maintain the truth. He cannot be deceived, except as he permits himself to be deceived; for he is not a child of darkness, but of the light: he has but to maintain his place as such, and be subject to that Spirit which has come to be in him the Witness for his absent Lord. To Him the various forms of evil, however specious and alluring, are known fully. "The wise" (with that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom)—"the *wise* shall understand." Apart from such fear, which is not always to be found, alas, in the true Christian, we walk exposed to the enemy. Satan may assume the form of an angel of light; but we are not to be ignorant of his devices. Yet the whole armor of God is needed, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

3. Having thus exhorted his beloved Thessalonians, he closes with a prayer for them that they might be completely sanctified, or set apart to God in every faculty, whether of mind or body. Nothing less than this could he desire for them. Nothing less than this are we to tolerate in ourselves. What other can the presence of the indwelling Spirit imply? Is the house in which He dwells to be other than all His own? Power, too, certainly is His to accomplish in us all the will of God, whatever may be our own infirmity, or the opposition (always maintained in Scripture) between the Spirit and the flesh. Thus alone are we made to realize our full responsibility in every failure. So provided, we can never plead the power of that which is against us, nor even the presence in us (true as that may be) of inherited sinfulness,—of a nature still adverse to divine things. We *have* still such a nature,—instincts that would betray us to the enemy, and lead us indefinitely far away from all that is of God and good; and whoever does not know this does not know himself. But to suppose, on the other hand, that nature compels to obedience to it, is to ignore that which makes man what he is. We may act contrary to our nature, as well as follow it; and in the case of our fallen nature are responsible to do so; he who excuses his sins by his nature cannot justify himself in the court of his own conscience as to one thing that he has ever done. The Spirit is not, in fact, hindered by our nature; and he who walks in the Spirit shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

But what then? Does not this lead to a doctrine of perfection such as in various forms is held by so many Christians in our day? It does indeed set perfection before us; as does the apostle here. It allows no toleration of any *practice* short of this, even though explicit in its acknowledgment of an evil nature in us. Nor are there two levels permitted to us as Christians; so that, as some put it, to an imperfect man, of damaged moral powers, the law of Christ, in contrast with the law of Moses, requires no faultlessness, but only "perfect," that is, *pure* "love to God through Christ." No, Christ Himself, the highest and most perfect standard possible, is the one only standard for every Christian: "He who saith that he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6).

Yet who is there then who has attained this? Let Christian perfection be put only as Scripture puts it, as the full, perfect walk of Christ Himself, who will step forth and claim to have attained this? Could we find one that did so, how would the common consent of Christians regard such a claim? Rightly as

and may your whole spirit and soul and body be [b]pre- [b] 1 Cor. 1. 8.

we judge ourselves for all shortcoming, yet, alas, we *do* come short; and we must neither lower the standard, nor plead a damaged moral nature to excuse ourselves.

The sanctification of which the apostle speaks here is, of course, that practical devotedness of life and walk to God which continually develops with the expansion of spiritual intelligence in the things of God. There is another that underlies it as the blood underlay the oil in the priestly anointing. Of this the epistle to the Hebrews speaks. We are set apart to God by the blood of Christ, as those made His by that which has purged us from our sins to serve the living God. Only on the basis of this can we be set apart, then, for this service. Besides this we must have a new nature as in new birth, and the indwelling of the Spirit of God, that there may be freedom and power. Of this last the epistle to the Romans speaks (chaps. vii. viii.). Here it is the setting apart in detail of the whole man, in all his practical life, that the apostle prays for in behalf of the Thessalonians.

It is the God of peace whom he prays to sanctify them wholly,—the God to whom peace essentially belongs, as absolutely supreme,—incapable of being disturbed by that which, while it may even rage against Him, is yet entirely under His control, and made to serve and carry out His everlasting purpose. But He is the God of peace also as the Maker of it; to be with whom is to have all things thus at peace with us,—nay, working together for good: "if God be for us, who can be against us?"—which may indeed seem almost the opposite of the truth in a hostile world, and with the Cross the banner under which we are gathered. Faith, however, is in the invisible, and waits for its full and glorious justification at a future time; patience must have its perfect work, though in having this we are made perfect and entire, lacking in nothing (James i. 4). The Cross is the token of the world's enmity, but of God for us, and revealed as the God of peace, through Him who has made peace for us by the blood of His cross. In this way we are at once reconciled and sanctified: the God of peace sanctifies us through the peace that He has made for us through the work of His Son. That peace, accepted and enjoyed, makes us His in the inmost depths of our being; and becomes thus in result a peace with Him which is the reconciliation to Him of all our faculties.

Yet there are hindrances in us, and in the world around us, which call for the rousing of all our energies to overcome them. From these we need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, while it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a conflict in which the help of the might of God is needed, even against ourselves. So the apostle mingles together prayer and exhortation here.

The prayer in its first part is that God would sanctify them wholly; the last word being one which refers to final condition,—*holoteleis*, all-perfectly, or all-maturely. He adds to this, "and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word for "whole" here is *holokleron*, and is expressive of quantity, as the former word of quality. Every faculty of spirit, soul and body comes into the idea: no part is omitted in his desire for them. Spirit and soul and body make up the man. All that pertains to these—every faculty—he prays may be kept blameless (here the quality of the keeping is expressed) in the power of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A suited word with which to close an epistle which has been so much occupied with the thought of this coming, the goal of Christian hope. It is hope that encourages endurance; while we must remember the solemn reality of account to be given in His presence of what has been the course here. A slavish fear would be indeed an unsuitable accompaniment of the thought of His coming who will at that very time manifest for us the fulness of His salvation in bringing us into full likeness to Himself; but the thought of account

served blameless *to the coming of our Lord Jesus

*ἐν; but the English preserves the sense sufficiently. It is "to," so as to be "in."

given at such a time to such a Saviour can have nothing but sanctifying power for the soul.

Spirit and soul and body are His alike: we owe Him all; and Paul names them all to claim them all for Him. They are the constituent parts that make up man; and it should be clear, as it is consistent also with all other scripture, that man is thus defined as a tri-unity which proclaims his link with all creation, and himself the uniting centre of all. The vegetable takes up the dust of the earth, to inspire it with a living principle which raises it above itself, and becomes in it a principle of organization,—a prophecy of what various forms to come!

The animal follows the vegetable; and here there is not only life, but a living soul; and with this, organization is carried further; sensation appears, and voluntary motion; the vegetable functions are retained, but developed further, and perfected; with the *type* also of bodily structure, though the bodily form may still receive further development.

And now the crown is put upon the arch: the union of all lower existences with the higher nature of the angel is accomplished in man; in whom spirit is added to soul, and the image of God is in this way reached. I may repeat here what I have said elsewhere, that—

"Here an evolution there is, and a true one, not what has usurped its name; an 'unfolding' of a divine plan, in which there is, of course, progress and development, upon principles which are uniform throughout. Looking at organic being, we have three stages of progress clearly marked off from one another; the vegetable; the animal, which (in Gen. i.) is marked off as a new 'creation;' man, just as distinctly from the mere animal, as a creation also.

"Each of these contains what has preceded it, with an addition . . . There is economy of design, which at the same time gives unity to the whole; while there is advance on the part of that also in which this unity is shown. The mineral absorbed into the vegetable can scarcely be recognized any more as mineral; and it is worked up into still higher forms as the 'flesh' of animal and of man. The life of the vegetable is in the animal so characterized by the soul with which it is now united, that 'soul' and life become, in one aspect of soul, but equivalent terms. While the animal soul becomes again in man possessed of higher faculties than it ever had in the animal, and thus the fit companion and help-meet of the spirit.

"Not only so: we can go even beyond this as led of the blessed book which God has given us, and after the present life see a similar advance made still. For, as soon as he leaves the body, the saint, though still *having* soul, is now spoken of (as never while in the body) as a 'spirit;' and when he takes up the body again, this is now no longer a 'natural'—which is, literally, a 'psychical' body (a body characterized by the soul, or psyche)—but a spiritual body, (a body characterized by the governing spirit,) the body of the resurrection.

"Here is development, then, all along the line: of that there can be no question. God evolves (or unfolds) in this way the wondrous possibilities which lie wrapped up in what He has first produced. Here is *true* evolution, not the false thing of the evolutionist; but how is it accomplished? Is the soul developed out of the life of the plant? or the spirit developed out of the soul of the animal? Not so according to Scripture: at each step God must come in, and does; soul and spirit are separate creations. And how does the mineral rise into the plant structure? or this into the body of the animal? or the soul develop in man spiritual characters unknown in the animal? The answer of Scripture is, they do not raise themselves; they are *raised:* the development is in each case accomplished by the *descent* (if we may say so,) *of a higher principle*

Christ. [c]Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it. | c 1 Cor. 1. 9.

to unite itself to the lower. The lower is raised by the humbling of the higher to it, and the shadow of Christ is here already unmistakably seen in nature: the seal is set upon this method as divine.

"We need not wonder: 'all things were created by Him, and for Him,' and this is His stamp on what He would approve to us as current money in the realm of thought. Why should not the figure of the King appear on what is His? So is all nature, in fact, a witness for Him, a glorious interweaving of spiritual parables, which, if we had more ability to read them, would indeed transfigure the visible with the brightness of the unseen."

Scripture distinctly teaches in spirit, soul, and body a tri-unity of man. Spirit is that which makes him what an angel is, a son of God, and in his Father's image: for God is the Father of spirits (Heb. xii. 9). To have said, "Father of souls" would have made Him Father of the beasts: for the beast is, as well as man, a "living soul," and that because a living soul is in it (Gen. i. 30). The common version of our Bible obscures the last passage by rendering "life" instead of "living soul," which it puts, however, in the margin; of course, a "living *life*" would have no sense. In other passages the word is uniformly translated "creature" (or once, "thing,") when applied to the beast: a meaning which does not belong to it. Yet the corresponding Greek word (*psuche*) is rightly rendered "souls," (in Rev. viii. 9; xvi. 3,) where certainly animals are spoken of.

On the other hand, "spirit" is never ascribed to the beast in Scripture, except it be once in Eccles. iii. 21, where the Septuagint and Targums are against it, and where, at any rate, we have the mere questioning of one seeking by human reasoning to penetrate where revelation alone is competent to lead, the result being that he is left in utter perplexity. This is the very theme of Ecclesiastes, the insufficiency of human reason, as in Job the failure of human righteousness.

The spirit of man, as we are told by the apostle, is that by which alone human things are known; and thus it is the essential characteristic of man in the terrestrial creation. It is identified in Scripture with mind or understanding, and thus with moral as well as mental judgment; which certainly the beast has not. The attempt of the materialist therefore to make it only the breath of life which is in the nostrils, founded as it is upon the identity of the word for breath and spirit in both Greek and Hebrew, may be dismissed as the uttermost folly of a puerile imagination; which indeed we need but the passage before us to set aside: for what could be meant by the sanctification of the "breath of life?"

The soul, on the other hand, is, according to the same word of inspiration, the seat of the emotions, affections, desires, appetites, the link between the spirit and the body, and so practically at least the life of the body. In man it links itself with his higher nature, and is permeated with the light of human intelligence, sharing with the spirit immortality. Yet apart from this it characterizes, as is evident, the instinctive, appetite-governed life of the beast; to which indeed fallen man may in measure sink down: the natural man is just the "psychic" or sensual, "soul-governed" man; with an awful shadow over him as that, which the beast has not: that, for him, being degradation, which in the beast is its unfallen nature (1 Cor. ii. 14, *Gk.*).*

The devotion (as we ordinarily say) of the whole man to God is thus the measure of practical sanctification. Nor is this asceticism, or real self-denial even; except as there is indeed in us still an old self, which for the true Christian has lost its authority. A life to God is what is really life, with all the power and joy of spiritual vigor in it; and to seek to hold back any part of our being from this, is to prefer death to life, mutilation to complete, all-round

*See, as to this whole subject, "Facts and Theories as to a Future State," Part I. chap. 2,4–6.

Brethren, [d]pray for us; [e]salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. I adjure you by the Lord that [f]the epistle be read to all the * brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

[d] Eph. 6.19. Col. 4. 3.
[e] Rom. 16. 16.
[f] Col. 4. 16.

* Many ancient MSS. insert "holy."

capacity. Who that can be called Christian can deny this? Asceticism is an affront to God,—is itself a crippling of powers that belong to Him; to live to God is to live in no convent gloom, but in the full brightness of unhindered glory,—in His light to see light. It is in the joy of the Lord alone that strength is found to serve Him in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. The coming of the Lord Jesus is that which will introduce us into the perfect blessedness of this; and so in the power of this hope shall we be preserved blameless on the way to this consummation of eternal happiness.

Yet the apostle's hope is in Him whose purpose as to His people cannot fail. "Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it." We are upon the shoulders of the Good Shepherd; and if there were final failure, it would be His strength that failed. That would be as impossible for Him, as for us without Him success would be impossible.

The apostle speaks in the consciousness of his own need. He, so much above us all in knowledge and in devotedness, is nevertheless conscious of the help derived from the prayers of his brethren. He would have them also greet one another with the warm and open expression of Christian love. He is earnest that all should hear the epistle he had written to them (assured as he was of who was, in fact, the Writer of it) and not simply to leaders as the depositaries of truth, the comfort and responsibility of which belonged to all alike. Nor, where inspired Scripture was in question, were the mass called to "hear the Church," but the Church rather to hear the apostles. Thus he adjures them by the Lord that all should hear.

He closes with the usual valediction, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with them.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

THE second epistle to the Thessalonians is, after the manner of all second epistles, a supplement to the first. As the Christian hope —the coming of the Lord—pervades and characterizes the first epistle, so the *patience* of hope may be said to characterize the second. The coming of the Lord is still prominent: but it is more the coming to the world (His appearing or manifestation) than for the removal of His people out of it, which, though in an important place, is but once referred to (chap. ii. 1). The appearing of Christ is that which ends entirely "man's day" upon the earth, the time of man's will without manifest intervention on God's part. The manifestation of Christ will be the manifestation of the world also,—taken, as it will be, in open defiance of God and of His Son. And to permit the true character of it to come out, the restraint which unseen is upon it, and which makes things in the meantime tolerable, will be taken away, and the prince of this world unfurl the standard of rebellion amid the plaudits of the nations; and, all neutrality being at an end, the remnant of Christ's followers will once again, and more than ever, be as sheep among wolves, until the Shepherd with an iron rod "shepherds the nations."

This is the time of Antichrist and "the lie,"—the time of retribution upon those to whom, as having no love for the truth, God will send strong delusion; powers and signs and lying wonders giving apparently the same attestation to satanic falsehood as once was given to the truth itself. And thus men will be gathered against Jehovah and against His Christ (Ps. ii.), until the breath of the Lord smites down His enemies.

This then is the central subject of the epistle now before us; a most solemn one for us, who can already discern, and not afar off, the rising of these fateful storm-clouds. The practical lessons for us also are most important. All prophecy of the future is thus a present light in the dark places, to guide the feet of pilgrims in the path of God. Let us give it heed.

The divisions of the epistle are three, though not quite in accord with the three chapters of our common Bibles:—

1. (Chap. i.): In the midst of persecution, the ground of peace for the saints in the righteousness of God.
2. (Chap. ii. 1–12): The wicked one and the deliverance.
3. (Chap. ii. 13–iii. 18): Separation to God the manifestation of the saint.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE

THESSALONIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.)

In the midst of persecution, the ground of peace for the saints in the righteousness of God.

1 (1, 2): Grace and peace to the assembly from God the Father and the Lord Jesus, in whom they are.

1. PAUL and [a]Silvanus and Timotheus to the assembly of the Thessalonians [b]in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 2 Cor. 1. 19. 1 Thess. 1. 1.
b 1 Thess. 1. 1.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE present time is characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church: this the closing discourses of the Lord before His death, as John has given them to us, with the opening of the Acts, make manifest. But the presence of the Spirit convicts the world of sin, because they have not believed in Him (John xvi. 9): "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," is His own declaration (xv. 24). On the other hand, as to the Spirit Himself, sent to represent the One whom they have driven out of it, He says again, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him" (xiv. 17). Thus the Spirit is not only the Witness of the rejected Christ, but Himself also rejected; and this double rejection is for opposite reasons: for infidelity is from the heart, and so all arguments suffice for it. But thus it is plain that from the beginning it was a foregone conclusion that the world was not, as still the dream is, to be converted by Christianity, and that for the Christian it would be ever a place of rejection, as for his Master,—a place of darkness, as from the absence of the Sun. So Scripture consistently treats it ever. God is now calling out of it a people for His Name, and that is all we are to expect until Christ comes again and brings the day.

It is plain indeed, that the opposition of the world is not always felt to the same extent, or in the same way. On the one hand, the providence of God may avert the open assault of the enemy; on the other, the enemy has found by large experience that, according to the proverb, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church;" and that the lure is in general more successful than the open attack. Attack he will still, in disguise; and has learned how in the name of Christ, and in zeal for Him, to destroy His followers. A time, too, is at hand in which he will persuade himself that the rule no longer holds; or, rather, being moved by ungovernable fury in the knowledge that he has but a short time, he will again, and more defiantly than ever, make war upon God and upon the Lamb. But this will be the time of his complete overthrow in that day of the Lord which the apostle here assures the Thessalonians is not yet come, and the character of which he unfolds to us in this epistle.

In the meanwhile the world is nevertheless in steadfast opposition to the life of faith; and in whatever form it may be, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). The Thessalonians were suffering manifestly for Christ; and yet the enemy would persuade them, and by means of professing Christians themselves, that these very sufferings showed that they were in those times of divine judgment upon the earth which, being

2 (3-5): Increase in faith and love amid sufferings, which are a witness of their part in the kingdom to come.

2. We are bound to [c]give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as it is fit, because your faith increaseth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all towards the others aboundeth; so that we ourselves [d]glory in you in the assemblies of God for your [e]patience and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which

[c] 1 Thess. 1. 2.
[d] 2 Cor. 7. 14. 2 Cor. 9. 2.
[e] 1 Thess. 1. 3.

in righteous recompense for iniquity, could not be upon the saints, but on their adversaries. They might be at peace, therefore, and rejoice in being witnesses for their Lord, in sufferings which but demonstrated their worthiness of the Kingdom of God, for which they suffered.

1. The apostle, associating Silas and Timothy with him as before, greets them in the same manner as in the former epistle. As children of the Father, and owning Christ their Lord, he wishes and hails them with grace and peace from the Father and the Lord. Their sufferings altered nothing as to this,—only brought in the inexpressible comfort of it for the need in which they were.

2. The apostle then testifies his thankfulness for the increase of their faith and love. Faith grew in them exceedingly, love abounded. How good it is when we have not to look back to the happier times of a first love, but the vision brightens with the days that pass, under the beams of an unchanging sun that is ever rising into a more excellent glory! "From glory to glory:" that is the apostolic summary of progress,—the heart responding to the light that more and more shines in and gladdens it. "God who made the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6). This is no temporary or partial or interrupted display, as Paul speaks of it: "We *all* . . . are changed," he says. It is not of a few specially favored and exalted ones that he declares such things. He refuses to allow that of God's will any there are among Christians who are not partakers of so great a blessing as the beginning in his soul of an eternal day. He does not, as it were, allow for retrogression, or alternation of light and darkness, of even cyclical changes of this kind. The typical Christian is he who goes on from glory to glory. If there be darkness with him, or aught but steady progress, this is the abnormal condition to be accounted for, when the path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But, thank God, Scripture in its description of the Christian refuses to mingle the abnormal with the normal; and thus to make, as it were, the abnormal condition a thing of course.

The Thessalonians were making evident progress; and the trials through which they were passing did not hinder this: did they not rather help it? For when in Corinthians the apostle has shown us how "this treasure" of the light is in an earthen vessel, he immediately goes on to speak of trials and persecutions, and the bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus; this, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. iv. 7–10). Indeed, what can there be more helpful to the soul, than to be so openly and wholly identified with Him whom the world crucified that it may still ordain for us, (as it *will* ordain) His cross, and throw us upon the might of His arm, and the sweet consolations of His sympathy, who was Himself "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"?

This was the case with the Thessalonians: all people knew of them that they had "another king" than the man the Roman world adored: "One, Jesus;" One whose sway was more absolute than Cæsar's, and which reached where Cæsar's could not,—to the inmost recesses of the heart; in which it yielded a delight, to those who knew it not, all but incredible. Insanity it might be, but the hold it had upon His followers was quite unmistakable; a people whose emblem was a cross, and for whom "crucified with Jesus" was a sufficient answer to the suggestion of every opposing interest.

Thus they suffered; not amid plaudits, but reproach and obloquy; yet in

ye sustain; a [f]manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; that ye should be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, [g]for which ye also suffer.

3 (6-12): The revelation of Christ will glorify Him in His saints.

3. If at least it is a [h]righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to those that afflict you, and to you who are afflicted, rest with us at the [i]revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of his power, [j]in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus [Christ];* men who shall suffer the judgment of

[f] Phil. 1. 28.
[g] 1 Thess. 2. 14.
[h] Rev. 6.10.
[i] 1 Cor. 1. 7.
[j] Heb.10.27.

* Many MSS. omit "Christ."

which there was no sting to rankle, no bitterness to harden or inflame the spirit: they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name, and found in it all a fellowship with one another which sprang out of that first fellowship which was the bud enfolding every other. The apostle assures them that their sufferings for the King were but a manifest token, in the patience and faith sustaining them all through, of the righteous judgment of God, which counted them worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which also they were suffering. In Phil. i. 28, he argues similarly that the fearlessness of the disciples in view of their adversaries was an evident token of the perdition of the latter, and of their own final salvation. He who was already thus with them by the way would be found in corresponding attitude at the end of the way, both towards friends and enemies, whom His righteous judgment, as the apostle puts it here, could not possibly confound. He does not mean or say—it would be indeed out of the question for such as Paul to say—that suffering, any more than working, could give any title to acceptance on the part of the Righteous God. It was grace (as he says again to the Philippians,) that gave them even to suffer for Christ's sake. But grace had righteous title to count them worthy; and what it had wrought in them it was righteousness also to acknowledge. For the Kingdom of God they were already suffering, identifying themselves and identified too with it; and the result would show that it was no deception.

3. Paul goes on to the final recompense of that day in which God's righteous judgment will be fully displayed. He puts in the strongest way, by making a question of it, that surely for them there could be no question as to the future: for those for whom God had already shown Himself, in the support He had given them through all their afflictions at the hands of men. There is no change in the Unchangeable; and with Him whose righteousness had so manifested itself toward them in the past there could be no failure ever to distinguish between friends and enemies. It would be righteous still to recompense affliction in the day of recompense, to those who had afflicted them; while to His suffering ones there would be rest, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power,—the messengers who execute His will upon the ungodly, and upon those disobedient to the gospel of His grace.

Whether there are two classes here, or one in two aspects, has been much disputed. If all men are included in the judgment spoken of, then it is evident that all have not had the gospel preached to them. The judgment of the dead, as the book of Revelation exhibits it, is certainly not intended; but only that of the living when the Lord appears. Whether this also is a judgment strictly universal may be questioned; and the question cannot be answered here without a long digression. Even so, it need not be that the apostle meant to bring in all into a statement manifestly designed as consolation for the persecuted Thessalonians. Their persecutors had certainly this double character:—they knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle speaks of some even of the Corinthian disciples as not having the knowledge of God (1 Cor. xv. 34); and when the Son of God was in the world—before

everlasting [k]destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the [l]glory of his might, when he shall come to be [m]glorified in his saints and to be wondered at in all who have believed (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of the calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the [n]work of faith with power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be [o]glorified in you and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

k Phil. 3.19.
l Rev.19.11-16. Isa. 2. 19.
m Matt. 13. 43.
n 1 Thess.1. 3.
o Jno. 17.10. 1 Pet. 4. 14.

men's eyes, and preached of in their ears—"the world knew Him not." It was an ignorance with opportunity of knowledge; though this is, in fact, the condition of all the heathen. God could not hide Himself from men that sought Him, and all ignorance is, in its essence, of the heart rather than the mind. Man proves it, when the light comes, by his rejection of it. God's vengeance, as the text before us declares it, could not fall upon mere helpless babes: that were impossible to His nature. But here plainly their ignorance is that which makes them culpable, not such as would even palliate their condition.

But the gospel! the sweet glad tidings of God, so divinely suited to all man's need, and with its revelation of the incomparable God of our Lord Jesus Christ, made known in the depths of His nature by the love-gift of His Son—what must be the consequence, answering to the revelation of the depths of man's own heart in it, of his disobedience to the gospel? Men, says the apostle, who shall suffer the judgment of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might. It is not any materialistic annihilation that is declared or implied in this. Banishment from the presence of that glory which he has turned his back upon and despised,—hardening himself into a final, awful incapacity for it,—what is it but the "destruction" of one made at the first in the image of God,—and for communion with Him?

Just then, on the other hand, the saints shine out in glory—their inheritance for evermore. It is the time of which we hear in Romans as "the manifestation of the sons of God." Such by creation, but redeemed and immeasurably exalted by new creation, they now are seen as the fruit of Christ's work, their glory His glory: He is glorified in them, and marvelled at in all who have believed;—and believed the same testimony which had been given to the Thessalonians. These poor persecuted followers of Christ, who now need faith so much amid the trials surrounding them, will then be the marvel of the inhabitants of earth, and make men marvel at the grace bestowed on them.

The apostle closes with a prayer that they may now in the present time exhibit a character which shall answer to such a calling as is here shown to be theirs. He prays that God may count them worthy of it: that is, that He in the day of account may adjudge them to have walked as those governed by it; for this end, therefore, that God might accomplish in them all that was in His heart to do; which faith indeed would effect, as His instrument, but with a power, therefore, more than human. So would the name of Christ be glorified in them already; and they too in Him, for whom it was the highest glory to live, to suffer, and to die. It was the grace of God, and of the Lord Jesus bestowed upon them.

Div. 2.

The apostle now proceeds to put before the Thessalonians the character of that "day of the Lord," which it had been sought to persuade them had already come; to show them what would introduce it, and that there was a present hindrance; though the mystery of lawlessness was indeed already working, which would bring in the judgment upon it, in which man's day would end.

DIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 1–12.)

The wicked one and the deliverance.

1 (1, 2): Our gathering to Christ preceding the day of the Lord.

1. NOW we beseech you, brethren, by * the [p] coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind † nor

[p] 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17.

* Or, "in behalf of." † Literary, "from your mind."

He shows the apostasy which would be from Christianity, and the rise of Antichrist, the great apostate; in whom Satan would work in the display of miraculous power, such as once heralded the truth, but which now as "lying wonders," would be permitted to ensnare those who, having had the truth presented to them, had not the love of it, but rejected that which would have been their salvation. In this last Antichrist the Jewish and Christian forms of unbelief would come together; rising to a height of arrogancy and defiance of the living God, which would bring down the open judgment of God in the destruction of the blasphemer, whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His Presence. With him his deluded followers will receive their judgment, and the earth be liberated from the oppressive power of evil.

1. The apostle beseeches them not to be shaken or troubled by the statement, however it might seem authenticated, and even though it might purport to be from himself, that the day of the Lord had come. Taking their view of the coming of the Lord largely, and of necessity, from the Old Testament, the day of the Lord would seem to precede what they had been taught continually to expect as the coming of the Lord. The New Testament distinguishes between two phases of this,—His coming to receive His people to Himself, as the first epistle pictures it, the dead raised and the living changed, and both caught up together to meet Him in the air. When He *appears*, (to the world) "then shall we appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Thus His descent into the air and our gathering together unto Him are not the same as, but preparatory to, His appearing and our appearing with Him. This does not indeed imply any appreciable interval between them; but it leaves room for it; and we have seen elsewhere that such an interval there is, comprising, at least, the whole last week of Daniel's seventy (Dan. ix. 27)—the "end of the age" of the Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv.); and which has been there shown to be the cut-off end of the Jewish age, and not a Christian one. Christianity is then gone from the earth, with the departure of Christians to be with their Lord, and Israel is now again in the fore-front, the Lord's thoughts again centering upon her. Thus in this prophecy we find Him once more recognizing as His disciples Jewish saints in connection with the temple as of old, and a revived worship there. This has, as we shall see, an important bearing on the chapter before us. It accounts also for the character, so generally misunderstood, of a large part of the book of Revelation; in which, after the addresses to the seven churches,—a necessarily veiled prophecy of the Church's history till the coming of the Lord, the apostle is in the Spirit caught up to heaven, as in fact we shall be, and there beholds the redeemed glorified and enthroned around the throne of God. The book of the divine counsels is then put into the hands of One who, though seen as a Lamb slain, is now declared to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah; that is, the King of the Jews. Accordingly, when now the scene returns to earth, we find no more the Church, but Israel and the Gentiles once again distinct (chap. vii.), and in the temple of God the ark of His covenant (chap. xi. 19). By and by the Lamb Himself stands upon Mount Zion, and with Him the sealed remnant of the tribes of Israel, seen before (chap. xiv. 1).

All this has been hidden as to its true meaning from the mass of Christians —through the common confusion between Israel and the Church, and the assumption of the heirship of the latter to all Israel's promises. It is even counted

troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord* is present.

* "Of Christ" has very little support from MSS., and none from ancient versions.

"judaizing" to take passages like these in their plain sense. Those who do so are accused of robbing the Church of her just due, as well as largely depriving Scripture of its present interest for us. In fact, it is the very opposite; but here is not the place to discuss such matters, which must be fully examined in the book of Revelation itself,—of which we can know little aright if they are unknown.

The interval, moreover, of which we have been speaking, is a period of the greatest importance in the history of the world, as the period of its permitted development apart from the restraint under which it has been from God; and in which, therefore, its character is fully manifested. Until this is done the final judgment cannot take place; and this character of the day of manifestation must needs make it of the deepest interest for every one who desires to be with God in the present time. As presently we shall find Paul saying, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." All around us, therefore, that is going on which will be fully disclosed to all in the near future, but which God would already reveal to His people, that they may be delivered from any complicity with it, and be kept in communion with Himself. If this was true in the apostles' days, how much fuller must be its significance for days when the evil has been so long working. We need not forget that there is a present hindrance; which, moreover, we can trace, as it is most instructive to trace it, in the pages of history. What would it be for us, to acquire in this way the true history of the world as the scene of a warfare between good and evil, in the midst of which we still find ourselves, and when now approaching the crisis, as it surely is,—the forces gathering for the last, decisive conflict. What will prophecy become to us when we read it with such an application, as the living word of our glorious Captain of salvation,—the unfailing guidance of Him who seeth the end from the beginning, and whose heart is pledged to us in His cross of shame.

We are prepared now to understand the force of the apostle's adjuration "*by* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him," not to be troubled by any assertion, however loudly or confidently made, that the day of the Lord was already come. It would be equally correct, as far as language is concerned, to say "in behalf of," as "by." In either case there is seen the apostle's earnest solicitude, and to which he hopes and expects response from those he is addressing, that the coming of the Lord should be free from distortions which would hinder its due effect upon the soul. The thought of the day of the Lord as to precede it would in different ways be a real distortion and distraction of heart from the simple expectancy of the Lord from heaven. The day of the Lord belongs to Jewish prophecy and times not Christian. It would set them necessarily, therefore, upon the hunt for dates and calculation of times, which have been so fruitful a cause of disappointment to multitudes at various periods. The Lord had said to His apostles after His resurrection, that it was not for them to know times and seasons, which the Father had placed under His own authority (Acts i. 7). That which will be unfolded to the "wise" in Israel in the due time of their need (Dan. xii. 9–11) was expressly hidden from the leaders in the new dispensation. And so the apostle has already told the Thessalonians that of the times and seasons he had no need to write to them (1 Thess. v. 1).

The gathering of Christians to their Lord is the natural and necessary end of Christianity—of what is called the Christian dispensation. The "end of the age" which follows is, as already said, the end of another age—Jewish, and not Christian. The disciples are again in connection with the Jewish temple and worship, yet owned by the Lord. This means that, according to Micah's prophecy (chap. v. 3), "the remnant of His brethren" are returned to the chil-

2 (3, 4): The enemy and anti-christ.

2. Let no one deceive you in any wise: for [it will not be] except the apostasy come first, and the [q]man of sin

[q] Dan. 7. 25.

dren of Israel. There is no fusion, as some would have it, of times so different. It is when darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, that the Lord arises upon Israel (Isa. lx. 2); and this can only be when He shall have gathered the saints of the present to Himself. And thus He promises the Philadelphian overcomers that He will keep them out of the hour of trial that shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Immediately He follows this with, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. iii. 10, 11); and what else can deliver His own from the very "hour" of a world-wide trouble, but His own coming to gather them to Himself?

Nothing but trouble is connected with this thought of the day of the Lord being come. It is not the excitement of a vain hope that the apostle would repress, but the depression resulting from dread of that from which the Lord pledges His word to the Philadelphian saints, that they shall be delivered. It is not something, as some imagine, to be desired to pass through for the glory of Christ, and in testimony to Him. It is a time of judgment for iniquity, although it is true that the mercy of God makes it also a time of new birth for Israel, and for multitudes among the Gentiles also. But it is "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. xii. 1); and which the Lord emphatically reiterates as to be "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world unto this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21). The Thessalonians are in danger of being "shaken in their mind," or, more literally, "from their understanding," at the false announcement; which the apostle beseeches them in behalf of truths so precious as the coming of the Lord and the gathering of His own to Him, not to heed.

Even at so early a day in the Church's history, we see moreover, that the enemy was at work; and that in places where we should have little expected to find him. Thus the saints are warned that this falsehood may be put forth by persons assuming to speak under the guidance of the Spirit of God, or as a report of some oral statement of the apostle, or even by an epistle forged in his name. The variety of methods warned against show, at least, how far he believed deception might be carried; and probably from knowledge of what had been done elsewhere. At any rate, he knew full well the boldness and the craft of the great adversary of Christ and of His people, and the weakness and folly to be found among Christians, so ready to be caught by a plausibility, or daunted by an assumption of spiritual power. Is it not so still? and can we expect it to be otherwise now, than what we find in the very earliest epistles of Paul, when he, and such as he, were yet living to confront the error?

2. But he goes on now to show them how, in fact, the day of the Lord would be ushered in, and the magnitude of the evil which would necessitate the judgments characterizing it: evil which was indeed already at work, but upon which there was the restraint as yet from God, which hindered its full development. Before the *revelation* of Christ, there must be the revelation of Antichrist, the "wicked one" who will then be consumed by the breath of His mouth, and brought to nought by the manifestation of His presence.

This man of sin, moreover, would be the issue of an apostasy from the ranks of professing Christians themselves, and unite the treachery of a Judas (the son of perdition, John xvii. 12) with Jewish unbelief; yet still transcending this, in a blasphemous exaltation of himself in the very temple itself, challenging even Israel's Most High in the place claimed by Him as His earthly throne, and exalting himself as supreme above every god whatever, named among men. It is plainly the most pretentious and insolent defiance of God that can be even imagined; and yet with such imposing display of power that the masses of those once enjoying the light of revelation (Jewish or Christian) will be carried captive by it. For all the power of Satan, freed from restraint on God's part, will be let loose in it; and God will be giving over to believe a lie those who, having

be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or object

r Jno. 17.12. 1 Jno. 2.18. Rev. 13.11.
s Dan.11.36. Rev. 13.11.

once been solicited by the truth, have made a fearful and deliberate choice of error in its stead.

At the first statement of such an appalling diabolism as this impending, one would say, Here is something that has never been yet; something that would need no argument to convince us of its existence, if it *did* exist: and this is, surely, what would be the judgment formed upon the most thorough and profound examination of it in connection with all kindred passages. Here, we should say, is certainly the apostle John's great "Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son,"—the Christian revelation, on the one side; as on the other, he is "the liar, who denieth that Jesus is the Christ,"—the Jewish form of unbelief. It is needless, at present, to go further. In its character, as marked with such absolute distinctness, as well as in the time of the revelation, (just before that appearing of Christ, which brings the wicked one to an end,) and in its result, as carrying away the mass of unbelieving Christendom, as well as in its being given as an unmistakable sign of the day of the Lord, this devil-inspired power is guarded, as it would seem, from all possibility of being misapprehended, and decisively determined to be even yet in the future to us, however near. As we know, it has indeed been taken to be the papacy; and this was perhaps the universal belief of the Reformers; with whom, naturally enough, the evil shadow which brooded ominously over so much of the professing Church, suffered them to look no further for the full development of Antichrist. Nor were they mistaken in seeing features of this kind in one in whom the mystery of lawlessness assuredly has manifested itself in a manner so conspicuous. If, as the fruit of its working, the apostle John could already in his day declare that there were "many antichrists," and saw in this the character of the "last time," (1 John ii.18,) how clearly might it be expected that here was now the fruit, much more developed, and at least approaching its full ripeness. Did not the pope claim honors really divine? and did he not sit in this godless affectation of supremacy in the Church, the true temple of God? How could one look for plainer evidence?

Yet, however natural the error was in their time, there is one consideration which is by itself amply sufficient to prevent our following them. If Antichrist were already manifested over three centuries ago, the apostle's statement has for all this time ceased to have the significance he attached to it, as what would be an indication of the nearness of the day of the Lord. Now it is quite true that, for the Thessalonians, if we are only to think of these, it would still be a sufficient guard against any mistake such as he feared they might be making; for them the papal Antichrist would be yet far off. But to accept this as sufficient would be to say that the apostle wrote only for current needs, and did not know enough to give what would provide against such a mistake in the future. We may dismiss it, therefore, from our thoughts.

Moreover, the same consideration tells against the "man of sin" being, as this view would make him, a succession of individuals, instead of the one person, which really the whole prophecy suggests. Otherwise the sign would be insignificant, or, at least, its significance would be very much reduced. Nor can we imagine that this open defiance of God, which in fact brings in the long impending judgment, could be yet allowed to go on for generations more, unsmitten by it. It is the climax of insult and outrage, after all God's grace has been manifested in vain for salvation,—and, with the exception of a remnant preserved of God for Himself, the world of professed Christianity has gone after the devil's candidate and king. The final conflict is commenced, and the issue cannot long be in suspense: the battle is that of the great day of God Almighty.

While there may be lesser antichrists many, the definition of *the* Antichrist marked out by prophecy is, according to the apostle John, such as to describe,

of worship, so that he* sitteth in the [t]temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God.

[t] Matt. 24. 15.

* Some MSS. add, "as God."

not a concealed, but an open enemy. "Who is the liar," he asks, "but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is *the* Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). Thus there is no pretence of Christianity whatever, even the least orthodox. The pope does not deny,—he affirms,—that Jesus is the Christ: he never pretended to be the Christ, but only His vicar. Antichrist is, according to the full meaning of the word, "one in the place of Christ," but *not* His vicar: he is himself the Christ, and denies that Jesus is; and so denieth the Father and the Son,—the Christian revelation in its whole extent. Thus he does not, in the common idea of this, sit in the temple of God at all; for in the Church he is not, even by profession. The papacy, for all these reasons, cannot be the "man of sin;" the pope is only one who exhibits certain similar features, and thus foreshadows the great apostate.

This leads us further to realize what the sitting in the temple of God must mean. If the Church of Christ be necessarily excluded, then there is but one other temple of which we can think; and that is the temple at Jerusalem. For the present it does not exist; and by many it is still believed to have passed away for ever. It is useless to show them the plainest statements of the Old Testament; for these they take as merely Jewish symbolism, to be applied in spirit, not in letter, to the Christian Church. But they cannot doubt that when the Lord, in His prophecy upon the Mount of Olives, speaks of "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," He is speaking of that very temple which was then before Him. The temple then existing, of course suffered destruction at the hands of the Romans, and according to the Lord's own prophecy; but the application of His words as given in Matthew to anything that happened before or at that time—to the standards, for instance, planted on the site of the already desolate sanctuary, is entirely set aside by the connection in which He places it. For the abomination is the sign at which His disciples are to flee, and then follows a tribulation so great that, except the days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; immediately after which the sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens are shaken; and "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The Lord then speaks of angels sent forth to gather His elect from the four winds, of the going forth of the wise virgins (His true saints) to meet Him; of His sitting on the throne, and the nations being gathered before Him for judgment, when He separates between the sheep and the goats, and the latter depart into everlasting fire. It is with a violent wrench, indeed, that these things can be torn apart from one another; while by no possibility can they all be made to have taken place at the destruction of Jerusalem, now more than 1800 years ago. They undoubtedly all concur at the time for which the Thessalonian saints were looking, and for which after this long delay, that the longsuffering of the Lord might be salvation, we are looking still. (*See notes to Matt. xxiv, xxv.*)

But thus we see how there can and will be, in the last days, a revival of Jerusalem and Jewish worship there, which now becomes continually easier to anticipate, with the increasing Zionite movement, and the actual increase of the Jews in the land, which Scripture assures us again will be their own. That they are going back still in unbelief makes the temple worship easier to understand. It would be more difficult to see the connection of those disciples with Jewish worship in the days contemplated, (whom yet the Lord evidently owns as His own, and listening to His voice,) if we had not the knowledge of that coming of our Lord into the air, and our gathering to Him there, which precedes His appearing, and which the apostle is in earnest that we should not confound with the day of the Lord. If once we see the interval which elapses

3 (5-8): His revelation and portion at the manifestation of Christ.

3. Remember ye not that while I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he may be revealed in his own time. For

between our gathering to Him, (which ends Christianity, in the sense we attach to it ordinarily, upon the earth,) and His appearing with us, which brings in the blessing for Israel and the world at large, things are in the main clear to us. The brethren of the Lord have returned to the children of Israel (Mic. v. 3). They are very much in the position of the disciples while the Lord was yet with them, and which continued for some time after the resurrection, while, acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah, they were "daily with one accord in the temple," and were "all zealous of the law" (Acts ii. 46; xxi. 20). Of such the apostles at the time of the prophecy we have referred to, were fitting representatives.

Among Israel, then, back in their own land, and obeying the voice of the Lord their God as made known to them by Moses' law (Deut. xxx. 2, 3), there will arise the dark and terrible figure of the last antichrist, the outgrowth of Jewish unbelief and consummated apostasy in which Christendom will end. The prophecies of Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation and the wilful king enlarge and confirm our knowledge of what is here; which the book of Revelation completes for us on both sides, the Jewish and the Christian. The figure in Daniel (xi. 36, 37) can scarcely be mistaken, of the king who "shall do according to his will, and shall exalt himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." Here he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God. The simple placing in juxtaposition of these prophecies delivers us from all uncertainty as to the application here.

3. The apostle had already told them,—not some *other* things which would enable them to understand these (as many take it,) but these very things. The Thessalonians had forgotten already instruction they had received: a forcible reminder of the need on our part of that written Word which God in anticipation of it has provided for us. How it becomes us, in every detail, to make sure that we have the exact statements of Scripture to build our souls upon. The careless quotation of it from memory, which so often for many does duty for the real words, is a very positive injury to us, in clothing with the authority of inspiration what are the fallible conceptions of men. While, for exact, trustworthy memories, it is of course a first requisite that we exactly scrutinize the text which we store up in them; that the very perfection of our memories may not make perfect a delusion, which every recurrence of it to our minds shall only the more stamp there.

But now they knew what was keeping back the development of this wickedness so that it should only be revealed at the time ordained for it. For, though the mystery of lawlessness was already at work, there was One who held it back, and would do so, until He should be out from the midst. There is no reason to doubt, although He be unnamed, who this power restraining is. It is evident that the apostle expects the Thessalonians to have this knowledge; and if it were not from other instruction than his epistle furnished, then we too ought to be able to gather from it what they should. And indeed there seems no great difficulty, when once we have recognized the character of the evil, in recognizing the power which holds it back.

The "*mystery* of lawlessness" is not the mere fact of its existence: it has existed since ever the world was. Man doing his own will is, alas, too common a thing to excite any wonder; the wonder is when the grace of God delivers him from this madness and misery of his fallen nature. The "mystery of lawlessness" ceases, as such, in its manifestation. The special form of the mystery is then revealed in an open opposition to God and His Christ, which is developed out of the bosom of Christendom itself; setting up a false god and a false christ, to give the world its long-sought liberty from divine restraint, and bring its

the [u]mystery of lawlessness already worketh; only there is one who now restraineth until he be out from the midst; and then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall [v]destroy with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his presence.

[u] 1 Jno. 2. 18.

[v] Isa. 11. 4. Rev. 19.15, 20, 21.

vaunted progress to perfection, which under Christianity it has found it impossible to attain.

In fact, already the failure of Christianity is proclaimed; and already there are incipient attempts to provide a substitute, not always covered even with a Christian dress. It will be noticed, also, how largely these lay claim to the supernatural, or what has been accounted such, and live in the borderlands of the unseen and "occult." The craving for knowledge, which is to turn to sight a faith too much given to be credulous, finds here broad fields which, being outside of Scripture, cannot invite credulity! The gains of science have been continually at the cost of the miraculous; and its marvels reveal it as the most practical friend of man. What may not the new century add to its conquests? while Scripture is constantly paling before it, or frowning on men with an oft-repeated story of a judgment continually deferred.

What hinders the outbreak of this spirit of lawlessness, which is indeed more and more declaring itself in every sphere to-day? It is nothing, and can be nothing but the strong hand of God repressing it, whatever may be the means or instruments He uses. But the prophecy before us speaks of One who is in the midst: until He be out from the midst, there will be a restraint upon the evil. Such an One it is not hard to recognize; nay, it would be hard not to recognize Him who is here to maintain the interests of the absent Christ, and here in that Church which is thus the House and Temple of God. When the Church is taken away to be with her Lord, then will He be also out of the midst; the Pentecostal dispensation, which began with His descent from heaven, will be at an end with His return to it. And this unites with what we have had before, to assure us that, Christianity being past, the only temple of God on earth will be, strange as it may seem to many now, the old temple at Jerusalem, so long forsaken, but where He will yet display Himself in more than all His glory of old time. The time of Antichrist will not, of course, be yet the time in which that glory shall return; but return it will; and the same prophet who saw its departure has seen and described its return, to depart no more (Ezek. xliii. 1–5):—a prophecy by the very terms of it never yet accomplished, but which, as God is true, must be therefore in the future, now surely near. So long as we fail to see this, what the apostle speaks of here will surely be misinterpreted by us, as it has been by so many. Once let us see this, and Daniel, Matthew, Revelation unite with Thessalonians in one clear, intelligible announcement which makes how much else clear as to the days at hand.

The Church must depart before the lawless one can be revealed; the light that is yet in the world must depart, and darkness cover the earth,—yea, gross darkness the peoples; and then "the Lord shall arise on" Israel, "and His glory shall be seen upon" her.

When that glory arises, its first act will be the smiting down of the powers of the earth, then combined against Him who made them. Israel is thus freed from the hand of her persecutors, and of the man of sin, with his standard of defiance unfurled in the very place of His throne. The words of the apostle here are but the application of the words of the prophet (Isa. xi. 1–5): "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)." In Revelation also (chap. xix. 15), "out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Certainly it is an extreme of spiritualistic misinterpretation which here can see only the destruction of error by the

¶ (9, 10): The universal testing.

4. Whose coming is according to the energy of Satan, [w]with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all* deceit of unrighteousness for those that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

[w] Matt. 24. 24. Rev. 13.13.

*Some MSS. omit "all."

preached gospel! The time of the manifestation of His presence will be the time of judgment for His gospel rejected; and the man of sin and his followers will not be converted, but slain. The redemption accomplished when He "treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," will not be a redemption by sacrifice, Himself *bearing* the wrath, as so many have taken it, but the redemption of His people by power out of the hands of their enemies. The iron rod is still indeed the shepherd's rod, but it is used in the defence of the flock; and so the Lord says of His saints, as associated with Him at that time: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces even as I received of My Father" (Rev. ii. 26, 27; Ps. ii. 8, 9). Thus alone will the world come under the dominion of the saints.

4. The apostle goes on to show what the Lord speaks of as "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. iii. 10). Scientific infidelity now avouches with a sneer that we never see a miracle, and Hume's argument against all evidence in favor of such is its contradiction of universal experience. But it is soon to be matter of extensive experience that miracles there are; only in a very opposite interest to that of Christianity. These things are even now showing themselves in a more or less tentative and doubtful way; they are yet to throw off all reserve, and challenge the faith of the world. "Powers and signs and wonders" are the threefold designation of miracles in Scripture: "wonders," which excite attention and admiration; "signs," or things that have meaning and doctrine; "powers," that are evidently beyond human. These have borne witness in past time to the truth;—never proved it, apart from the truth itself with which they were connected: and this is the mistake of so many at all times, that a real miracle—something that could be rightly spoken of as all these—is an absolute guarantee of the message that it brings. Thus they are ready at any time to follow what is thus supported. Yet, if there are heavenly beings,—"angels that excel in strength,"—it is evident that, if permitted, and if evil enough to attempt it, they could at any time lead us thus according to their mind. Now that is the very thing which God has declared He will permit, when the time shall have arrived. When men have shown that they desire the truth no longer, and the patient longsuffering of God has, at last, no justification further, that will have come to pass for the professing Christian world which we recognize as coming to pass in the history of individuals: God will say again, "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." And then will rise up one "whose coming is according to the energy of Satan, with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood,"—no longer in the interests of truth, but of a lie,—"and in all deceit of unrighteousness for those that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Dangerous would it be, as well as foolish, to assert that this is of the past, and not the future;—that it has been fulfilled in Romanism, or in any like way. Has the power of Rome, whatever its pretension to fabulous miracle may be, exhibited itself after this fashion? No doubt, there is a class at all times ready to be duped in this way, as we see in the rapid progress of such transparent absurdities as, for instance, "Christian Science;" but in all this there is only the feeble anticipation of a delusion which will yet carry away the multitudes of unbelieving profession. The arch deceiver is not in the Vatican, nor else-

5 (11, 12): The recompense in divine government.

5. And on this account God sendeth them an energy of error, that they may believe [z]the lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had [y]pleasure in unrighteousness.

[z] 1 Jno. 2. 22.

[y] Rom. 1. 32.

where at the present time: he is to be revealed in his time. And yet we may indeed discern the foreshadows of this tremendous iniquity, and realize that his way is being prepared in many events and movements that are taking place under our eyes.

5. The apostle closes here with the assurance of a holy, divine government working in all this; the worst form of evil will become (while remaining evil no less in itself) the meting out of righteous recompense to the rejectors of the truth. Indeed the very motives which lead men to the rejection of Christ lead them of necessity to the reception of Antichrist. "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive." That which is according to their own taste they are permitted at last to have; and we need not doubt that it will present itself with abundance of pretentious claims, and decorated with all the taking titles of liberty, equality and fraternity, which have already proved their power to deceive the masses, and in the name of which, about a century ago, the blood of multitudes ran copiously in the streets, to the frantic delight of the onlookers. Still that which hath been is that which shall be—only with increase of malignancy in an incurable evil, for which not even a palliative any longer exists. The light will have departed which can make vice any longer ashamed, and from the restraint of all but the lusts of those as reprobate as themselves men shall at last be free. The earth owes this spectacle yet to the patient heavens; and it will be given: sin allowed to be its own terrible witness against itself,—a witness at which eternity will shudder.

Let us beware also, Christians as we may be, how we treat the truth which God has entrusted to us. Here also the rule works surely, that every bit of truth rejected delivers us up to error; and on the coin for which we sell the truth there is at all times, faint as it may be, the image of Antichrist. What debtors are we to divine grace! May we be kept in the sense of our need of it, in the salutary humility which will make us ever afraid most of all of our own wills. Alas, "we *had* turned every one to his own way" but let it suffice us now: "Jehovah hath laid upon *Him* the iniquity of us all."

Div. 3.

The doctrine of the epistle ends here; and the apostle, after his constant manner, closes with exhortation. Sin, the world, the power of the enemy, are yet to manifest themselves in a horrible unity which shall be a lesson for all time. The principles are all at work around us, though the restraint of God's hand is upon their working. The saint is, therefore, one separated from the world with a far more than outward separation: he is set apart in his very nature to God, in whose service he finds freedom, in communion with whom is his deepest possible delight. As the Lord could in every sense say, so can the believer say, in so far as his new nature is concerned, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Just on this account, however, he is conscious that there is still within him a world that would link him with, and claim him for, that outside world from which God has separated him. And because of this, self-judgment is a constant necessity to him. He has a self of which he can yet say, through grace, that it is not himself. He is delivered from it, and yet has to abide in the power of his deliverance. He is exercised as to good and evil after a manner which no other being knows; painfully, and yet most healthfully. He is qualifying indeed for companionship with Him who for him has felt the horror of sin,—not *in* Him, but *upon* Him. Abundant provision has there been made for him, that he may grow into communion with his Lord.

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. ii. 13–iii. 18.)

Separation to God the manifestation of the saint.

1 (13-17): Let the chosen and called stand fast.

1. BUT we are [z]bound to thank God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning [a]chosen you to salvation by [b]sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, unto which he called you through our gospel to the [c]obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [d]Stand fast, therefore, brethren, and hold fast the [e]instruction which ye have been given, whether by word or by our epistle. And our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us, and hath given us eternal consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and [f]establish you in every good work and word.

2 (iii. 1-5): In the midst of conflict from without.

2. For the rest, brethren, [g]pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be [h]delivered from unreasonable and evil men, for all have not faith. But [i]the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and [j]keep you from the evil. And we are [k]persuaded in the Lord as to you, that ye both do and will do what we enjoin. Now the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and [l]into the patience of Christ.

3 (6-18): And conflict within.

3. Now we enjoin you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye [m]withdraw from every

z ch. 1. 3.
a 1 Thess. 1. 4.
b 1 Pet. 1. 2.
c 1 Thess. 2. 12.
d 1 Cor. 16. 13. Phil. 4. 1.
e 1 Cor. 11. 2.
f 1 Thess. 3. 13.
g Eph. 6. 19.
h Rom. 15. 31.
i 1 Cor. 1. 8. 1 Thess. 5. 24.
j Jno. 17. 15.
k Gal. 5. 10.
l Rev. 1. 9.
m Rom. 16. 17. ver. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 5.

For him all the history of the past as God reads it has been written out, in what becomes in the divine wisdom types and parables of the present; while he is set in a place which lifts him above the whole sphere of seductive self-interest into that new creation scene where Christ is all and in all, and in whose light he finds light. In abiding in Christ, in the joy of what He is, and thus finding everything his, the power and so the manifestation of the saint are found.

1. What has saved us from the awful tyranny of evil in a world whose self-chosen prince is Satan, and not Christ? From first to last salvation is the work of divine love, which has from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Out of the whole region of falsehood the sovereignty of truth has rescued us, making way for itself by the sweet enfranchising glad tidings of grace which is in Christ, and which leads us on a path brightened by the beckoning glory. The first exhortation, therefore, is to stand fast and hold fast the truth. There were already adversaries, as the epistle itself shows; and they need a strength beyond their own, which he prays the God they knew so well, and who was in such tender relationship with them, to minister abundantly.

2. He needs also their prayers himself, charged as he is with that gospel the power of which they had themselves proved, that it might run and be glorified in many like themselves, spite of the opposition of unreasoning and evil men, in whom true reason would have led to the faith they had not. For them and for himself he can lean upon the Lord's faithfulness; desiring that the Lord Himself direct their hearts into the love of God, and into that patience of Christ which yet went on untiringly for the accomplishment of men's salvation.

3. Disorder within faced them more menacingly; and here grace did not suggest an easy toleration of the evil, but separation from it; not indeed the cutting off of the offender from the assembly at large,—a severity of dealing not

brother who walketh disorderly, and not according to the instruction which ye* received from us. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us; because we walked not disorderly among you, neither ate we the bread of any one without cost, but [n] working night and day, with labor and toil, that we might not be burdensome to any of you; [o] not that we have not authority, but that we might give you an ensample ourselves to imitate us. For also, when we were with you we charged you this, that if any one will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear that there are some among you, walking disorderly, working not at all, but busybodies. [p] Now such we enjoin and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that, [q] working with quietness, they eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not [r] weary in well doing. And if any one obeyeth not our word by this epistle, mark that man, and do not [s] keep company with him, that he may be ashamed; and esteem him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord be with you all. The salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is the token in every epistle, so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

n Acts 18. 3. Acts 20. 34. 2 Cor. 11. 9. 1 Thess. 2. 9.
o 1 Cor. 9. 12. 1 Thess. 2. 6.
p 1 Thess. 4. 11.
q Eph. 4. 28.
r Gal. 6. 9.
s Matt. 18. 17.

* Some read, "he;" some, "they."

yet required by the gravity of the case, but the lesser reproof of personal avoidance. It would be the destruction and not the maintenance of discipline to carry it beyond the end sought, which was in the first place restoration, where possible, and not cutting off. No doubt there are cases in which the sin is of a nature to destroy all present confidence, and then there is no other course but cutting off. In the one before us there is the lack of self-judgment, a spirit of self-indulgence, and spiritual conceit, in itself distressing and liable to be followed by some open fall; but as yet not without hope of recovery. Here was a call, therefore, for admonition, a testimony to the conscience, in which, of course, every one feeling rightly would coincide, but still individual. Generally followed up, it would do much to prevent the possibility of continuance of an evil, of which the streams that fed it had to be found outside itself. Foolish talkers are maintained by the folly of hearers; and bread eaten without cost must find those ready to pay the cost. Here, indeed, a false liberality might do harm to many more than those who indulged it. How little is thought of the various ways in which we may become "partakers of other men's sins!" How careful was the apostle, while having such a claim as few besides could urge, and none perhaps could refuse, still rather, for example's sake, to forbear to act upon it, than furnish the least possible excuse for others in this way. Self-sacrificing love had marked the conduct of one who sought not theirs but themselves. And the rule for these disorderly ones was that they were to obey the general law of man's existence, that if they did not work they should not eat.

On the other hand, there must be care that there should be no harshness or unbrotherly conduct, which would destroy once more the effect of the discipline. Not harshness or legality could accomplish the end sought, but only love; the assurance of which would lay hold upon the offender; drawing, while enabling the admonition to obtain audience. Only at another's feet can one wash them.

The apostle closes his epistle, as usual, with salutations. He prays that they may abide constantly in peace; true as the ordering of the Lord of peace can

make it. Peace is that to which all His ways tend ever, and which will be the final result of all. Creation, brought into complete subjection to Himself, will manifest in all its parts and relations the harmony of its complex and glorious unity. To this peace every step taken truly with God tends therefore also necessarily. And he who walks with God finds ever that, as His ways are holiness, so, spite of whatever opposition, all His paths are peace: the presence of the Lord with His people must needs ensure this.

To guard them against such impositions as he was, at least, afraid of in their case, he tells them that his greeting, in his own handwriting, would be the token of a genuine communication from himself. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was, as we ever see, the inner token.

THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

IN the epistles to the Corinthians, as already said, we have the Church presented as the practical fellowship of saints on earth, which is, as such, the living expression of that fellowship with Christ to which they are called (1 Cor. i. 9) as having the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16). They are the Body of Christ, He being the Head, to whom they are subject, His Spirit dwelling in them to work out in them intelligently His will. They are thus His witnesses upon earth, and as a whole His corporate witness,—the "epistle" (not "epistles") "of Christ, read and known of all men" (2 Cor. iii. 3). For this every member of the Body is needed, and indeed as a whole must "grow up unto Christ in all things," "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13, 15). Thus there is a ministry within necessary, as well as an outside testimony, and "the whole Body, fitted together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body to the edifying of itself in love."

It will be thus seen how essential is the thought of ministry to the Church; and so it will not be wondered at that the second epistle should be devoted wholly to this subject, as a fitting and needful appendix to the doctrine of the first. How can there be fellowship with the Great Minister to all our need, without participating with Him in this character? Love, which "seeketh not her own," is the very spirit of this; and without love, what is all speech, all knowledge, all giving of one's goods to feed the poor? Nay, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

For all this, it is Christ who is the one sufficiency; and from Christ alone, therefore, must the Church draw for competence of every kind. Thus for fellowship with Christ, separation from the world and all its wisdom is insisted on; a world which has rejected Christ; which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh; and over which broods the dark shadow of its self-chosen prince, who is not Christ, but the great enemy of Christ and of His people.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE first epistle, then, is that which gives the doctrine of the Church as a fellowship of Christians, in the world, while called out from it, subject to Christ in whom is all their sufficiency, and whose witness they are, as His Body by the indwelling Spirit expressing His mind.

The first division (chaps. i.–x.) naturally insists upon that sufficiency in Him for such true wisdom as has in it that which meets the need of man as guilty, corrupt, and estranged from God, incapable of himself of any but that which more and more leads astray from Him. Thus of necessity the true wisdom refuses all affinity or mixture with the wisdom of the world, which, as the apostle James declares, is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. iii. 15). Accordingly, such characters develop here. World-wisdom among the Corinthians goes hand in hand with fleshly indulgence, and maintains no due separation from the idolatrous demon-worship round; and the treatment of these things completes the first division of the epistle.

The second division applies to the assembly in itself;—its order, testimony in gathering, membership, spiritual manifestations; with the spirit of love which is the pervading and controlling principle,—the bond of perfectness which unites all together. It is shown, first of all, that God's order in creation is to be maintained in the Church,—an important principle, with which the law of *new* creation might be thought to be in conflict, and so to supersede it. Nature is set in its true place in regard to faith; and its teaching as not to be slighted, but understood. In the gathering of the assembly Christ is then seen as the object before all, in the love in which He has served and given Himself for them. In fact, the Cross, as the wisdom and power of God, is that which brings into communion with God and with one another. Its character in the supper as a pure remembrance is important here; and, as awaking the love and worship of the hearts, prepares for the activities which necessarily flow out of these. We are led on, therefore, to consider the company so gathered as the Body of Christ; in a relationship of dependence on, and so of ministry to, one another, and of obedience and witness to the Lord Himself. The twelfth chapter shows us how this is secured by the variety of those manifold gifts of which the

Holy Spirit is the living energy. While in the thirteenth, we have that which is more excellent than all gift, and which alone can make the gifts answer their designed end in the edification of the Body at large.

After this we come to what practically exemplifies the "more excellent way" in the assembly, and asserts, moreover, the presence of God among His people,—the power of an assembly at all times. God and men are seen here together; and the responsibility of man is necessarily insisted on,—of the gifted in the exercise of their gifts. This ends the second division of the book.

The third brings us to the resurrection from the dead. The Church is built upon the risen Christ: thus the gates of hell (or hades, as it should be) cannot prevail against her (Matt. xvi. 18). But, though already a partaker of resurrection life, there is still needed the resurrection of the body, or its change, in order to full manifestation in this character. It suits well, therefore, the epistle which treats of the Church on earth, to follow her on to the time when, at the coming of her Lord for whom she waits, "death shall be swallowed up in victory." Accordingly there is a development of this truth here such as we find nowhere else in Scripture. And this closes the doctrine of the epistle.

The last chapter is of the usual character of practical exhortation, mingled with those salutations and topics of personal interest, which have for us, as being likewise in the body, a personal interest too.

The chief divisions, therefore, are—

1. (Chaps. i–x.): The Assembly in its all-sufficiency in Christ, excluding all mixture with the wisdom, license, and demonolatry of the world, from which it is called out.
2. (Chaps. xi–xiv.): The Assembly in its fellowship, associate witness, and ministry of each to each and to all in the Body of Christ, "for the edification of itself in love."
3. (Chap. xv.): The resurrection, or transformation, of the body; that the heavenly may bear the image of the heavenly One.
4. (Chap. xvi.): Exhortations and greetings.

NOTES.

WE have, then, in this epistle the Church in the world, not of it; and what is proper to these two things. The assembly is, in the meantime, gathered here; but it is the "ecclesia," the gathering "called out,"—the Gershom of the true Moses, "a stranger there" (Ex. ii. 22).

Whatever its heavenly character, it is always looked at in Scripture as on earth, and nowhere else, at the present time. The number of those who belong to it but have passed into the presence of their Lord in no wise affects this view of it. The Church is here, for here is the Spirit who gathers it; and the very indwelling of the Spirit, by virtue of which we become *members* of Christ, members of His Body, is in our bodies (chap. vi. 19), which departed saints have dropped for the moment. Thus it is plain, the importance to the Church, as well as the individual, of the resurrection doctrine which is developed in the fifteenth chapter; when the Church as such goes to be with the Lord, the body must be refashioned for its new and glorious condition.

Corinth, as we have already seen, was a very type (even among the light-hearted Greeks themselves) of luxurious self-indulgence. The derivation of the name is at least possible from a verb which means "to sate." And this is found in the present epistle—its only occurrence in the epistles—where the apostle reproaches them for the way in which they had yielded again to the Corinthian spirit: "Now *ye are full*" (chap. iv. 8). Thus the background of the epistle is, as we might expect, eminently fitted to give effect to the presentation of the truth as given in it.

DIV. 1.

The first division, as already said, shows us the all-sufficiency the Church has in Christ, which renders it entirely independent of the world. This is not simply incapable of yielding help to it—it is hostile. The place of the cross of Christ is not merely a wilderness to it; it is an enemy's country, and its seductions more to be dreaded than its open opposition. This was already proving itself at Corinth; and the apostle's first work here is to fence off the garden of the Lord, not from the irruption of the wild boar that wasted Israel's vineyard, but from the seeds of poisonous growths which every wind wafted, and by which the fruits of Christian life would be vitiated and strangled. The wisdom of the world had shut out from it the glory of Christ, and ministered but to the fleshly lusts which evidenced the heart away from God, and seeking its gratification in that which carried it continually further from Him. Over it all a still darker shadow brooded,—that of a "prince of the world" which it had chosen for itself, and whose power depended upon his ability to foster every delusion, increase the already portentous darkness, and with the heavy dreams of a drugged slumber shut out all the realities of God's own light. This is the scene in which the Church of God is not merely to remain for the time of her pilgrimage, but to maintain a testimony for Christ which is, by the very fact, a defiance of the usurper of dominion in the creation of God, and therefore certain to provoke the whole power of Satan to deadliest opposition. Blessed to know that greater is He that is with us than all that are against us; but that does not mean that the warfare is not one that will put us to the fullest proof, and call for the utmost energy to gain the victory.

The first division, then, deals largely with the foe outside, but with one constantly seeking to gain footing inside; in which also he is aided, alas, by the unfaithfulness of the people of God themselves, which is, indeed, his main dependence. To meet all this the apostle shows the fulness of the resources that are in Christ for His people, and insists upon whole-hearted reliance upon them, and refusal of all the spirit and moral elements of the world around.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i–x.)

The Church with its one, unique sufficiency excludes all other.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Chaps. i.–iv.)

The barrenness of human knowledge,—the sufficiency of the divine.

SECTION 1. (i. 1–16.)

The Church under Christ the Lord.

1 (1-3): An apostle by calling to those saints by calling, who own Christ their Lord.

1. PAUL, a [a]called apostle of Christ Jesus, [b]by the will of God and [c]Sosthenes the brother, to the assembly of God that is in Corinth, to those [d]sanctified in Christ Jesus, [e]called saints, with all who

[a] Rom. 1. 1. [b] 2 Cor. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. [c] Acts 18. 17. [d] Jno. 17. 19. [e] Rom. 1. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

SUBD. 1.

The apostle necessarily begins with what is the first necessity; contrasting the barrenness of human knowledge with the sufficiency of divine. What so many slight as doctrine is thus the basis of all else. So we find the order elsewhere: Scripture is profitable first for doctrine, then reproof, then correction, instruction in righteousness. There must first of all be the light, which shows us the road and whither we are going. And the light must be from heaven, as nature witnesses; in himself man has none, save as the candle which lights up but a few yards round us, and that dubiously. The best natural knowledge is of our own lack of it, the sin that perverts our judgment, the death which we in vain call natural, the foreboding of what is beyond, a God whose handiwork we recognize, yet afar off: why is the Maker of the world so far off practically, as it has to be confessed He is? Revelation must come in, as the wisest of the heathen recognized, to deliver man from the uncertainty in which he is, and declare to him, what surely there must be, the way of life. Spite of all this, the world congratulates itself upon its wisdom; but "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God."

Sec. 1.

It is this darkness and uncertainty on man's part, which could not be but as the result of a moral obliquity, which has turned him from the Source of light and blessing, that has placed him under the control of the "gods many and lords many" that oppress him now. His passions govern him, and by the skilful use of these he is turned, as the ship in the master's hand, "whithersoever the governor listeth." With the entrance of the light from heaven, this misery ceases; the kingdom of truth has come: one righteous and sufficient rule is discerned and welcomed, which embraces all circumstances, and sets the subject heart at rest. How completely may it be so for him for whom a Son of man sits upon the Father's throne, and the crown of glory rests where once was the crown of thorns. It was soon understood of Christians that they had "another king, one Jesus;" whose sovereignty meant freedom in obedience, the sweetest possible despotism of a perfect and divine love.

This is what animates the apostle as he addresses himself to the Corinthians now. He is full, as may be plainly seen, of the Lordship of Christ, their Lord and his. Alas, they needed the reminder of what alone set right the whole state of things amongst them. How could they be "full" and "rich" and

in every place *f* call upon the name of our *g* Lord Jesus Christ, theirs and ours; grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

f Acts 9. 14, 21. Acts 22. 16. 2 Tim. 2. 22.
g ch. 8. 6.

"reign as kings" in the scene of His cross, if the sovereignty of Jesus had not been losing its rightful hold upon them? How could they be parcelling themselves off as followers of this and that one among the servants by whom He had ministered to them, if all were serving the Lord Christ with the simplicity they once had? The "day of the Lord," with its "revelation of the Lord," did not shine for them as once, with its overmastering display of glory that eclipsed all others with its radiance. Hence his first aim, without any formal argument, which was unneeded, was to remind them of Him they served. To serve Him would soon be proved greater than to reign as kings on earth.

1. Paul reminds them also of his own call as an apostle by the will of God, which had wrought in spite of the opposition of the human heart in his own case, as in that of "Sosthenes our brother," whom he joins with himself in his epistle, now a "strong helper," according to the probable meaning of his name, as he seems to have been, in the time of the apostle's earlier labors at Corinth, a strong opposer. The brief way in which he is mentioned here, though the name itself may not have been an uncommon one, suggests that he was known to the Corinthians as the former ruler of the synagogue would be. It is certain he would not be brought forward in this way without some reason for it.

Thus divine sovereignty had wrought for Christ, as it had wrought in the self-same grace toward every one of those Paul addresses here, if not so manifestly. He does not fail to assert this presently in direct terms where he presses upon them their own knowledge of their calling (ver. 26). Here too he addresses them (as before the Romans) as saints by calling—God's creative call (Rom. viii. 30)—as he an apostle. The assembly is also by its designation as such a company "called out," which expresses in this application a body separated from the world which has crucified the Son of God, and to which every one who believes in Him is crucified in His cross.

The two epistles to the Corinthians are the only two written to the assembly of God as such,—that is, in true church-character. "The assembly of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father," is, as we have already seen, different in its suggestion; while "the assemblies of Galatia" shows by its plural form that "the Church which is His body" is in no wise the thought, but it leaves room for question—too much in accord with the condition shown in the epistle—whether they have in fact a divine character at all. "I stand in doubt of you" is written upon the very opening of it.

Ephesians gives us most fully of all the doctrine of the Church; but it is not written *to* the Church, but to the saints; and so we may say of Colossians. They are for individual faith and conduct, and not directions for the regulation of the Body as such. Corinthians is, without doubt, all that is written directly for this purpose, by him who was the special minister of the Church (Col. i. 25).

To the assembly, then, he writes, characterizing it first as that of those sanctified (or set apart to God) in Christ Jesus. The place they had in Him was necessarily, as that, a place, not of negative separation merely from this evil or that, but a separation in which God was distinctly before the soul, according to the perfection of His holy nature. "In Christ" was the accomplishment of this: He being both in His atoning work our deliverance from the distance which sin had brought in, and in the power of His glory transforming to His likeness the one in faith beholding it (2 Cor. iii. 18). Saints, therefore, we are by calling; for it is a "calling *above*, in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14). We are called out of a fallen world to a portion in Christ, with Him where He is. Our faces there, our backs must be here. There is our goal, our prize, the home of the light which brightens all our journey thither.

It is to the assembly of God in Corinth that Paul specifically writes: and this

2 (4-16): Their competent testimony to Christ as called to fellowship with Him, and the contradiction of divisions.

2. I [h]thank my God always for you, on account of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in him ye have been enriched in everything, in all utterance* and in all knowledge; even as the [i]testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift of grace, awaiting the [j]revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also [k]confirm you to the end, [so as to be] blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [l]God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the [m]fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

h Rom. 1. 8.
i 2 Tim. 1. 8. Rev. 1. 2.
j Col. 3. 4. Tit. 2. 13.
k 1 Thess. 3. 13.
l ch. 10. 13.
m 1 Jno. 1. 3.

* Literally, "word."

gives its character to the epistle, as has been said. But he is far from desiring it to be thought that it is on that account in any way restricted to a mere local interest. On the contrary, it is most instructive to see his earnestness to have it understood that all Christians are concerned in and addressed in it. He adds, therefore, to the specifically named Corinthians, "with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,—theirs and ours." Thus there is the widest possible appeal to attention, as afterwards the strongest claim to divine authority for all that is not expressly excepted from this: "If any man be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (chap. xiv. 37).

The "calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" is bowing to authority in the hands of the divinely appointed Ruler. To "call upon the name of the Lord" is the pass-word of salvation; and the apostle has no thought here of a mere lip-confession, although, of course, there may in fact be many who say, "Lord, Lord," while the heart knows Him not. But he credits all with their responsible profession, and from his inmost heart he desires for all that "grace and peace" which have but one source, one channel,—our Father God, and the Lord our Saviour.

2. He starts at once with what we have seen to be his subject here, by acknowledging what God's abundant grace had done for them, and the witness-place for which God had furnished them. They had been enriched by grace in all utterance and in all knowledge—in what was communicated to them, and in ability to communicate it to others. The testimony of Christ which had been brought to them in the gospel, had thus been confirmed in them; God was thus glorifying Him in whom He had been glorified on earth, in those endowments which we have soon to see were being perverted by the Corinthians to the glorifying of themselves—in fact to their own dishonor. As far as they were concerned, the gifts were those of grace only,—grace which had decorated the poor human clay in those who were but the "base things of the earth," and still as earthen vessels in which the treasures of heaven had been received. They lacked in no gift: God had kept back nothing that could be needed by them for the setting forth Christ, while the day of His revelation tarried, for which they were waiting; and by this would establish them also, that in His day they might be without blame. Paul assures them, therefore, of the faithfulness of God, who, having called them to the fellowship of His Son, could not repent of what He had thus done. Every one so called will, therefore, in like manner be confirmed, and so be found blameless in the day when divine grace shall have perfected its work in them, and the robes of their righteousness will be seen as washed white in the blood of the Lamb. But there is a way by which such an end is reached, as surely as there is the end also to which it leads. Both are alike ordained, and not one without the other.

With these reminders and with this encouragement, Paul appeals to them now by the name of Him whom they called their Lord against all division of spirit, and even of mind. The name of Christ is that which is named upon us

But I exhort you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly [n] united in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been shown to me concerning you,

[n] 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Pet. 3. 8.

all, and will have power, as the glory of it is realized, to unite us thus together. How can the servants of the same dear Lord fail to be united in a common obedience? It may be said, "They may misconceive what that obedience is." True; how much of this, in fact, there has been. And yet the correction of it is in the same spirit provided for: for the Lord Himself has guaranteed that "He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine;" and that is a principle, surely, of the most far-reaching significance. It may be questioned or denied, except as to some things of main importance; but what does it mean, to deny it? Is it to be supposed that, in matters of practical moment, He will allow the one who with downright simplicity desires to know the path, prepared at all costs then to walk in it, yet to be without the knowledge that he seeks; and so to err in that way of holiness of which it is written that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall *not* err therein?"

It is quite true, again, that in all such texts mistakes may be made, and *are* made. The wayfaring man, so marked, is not the idler by the way,—not the one who believes that the intelligence of divine grace means taking things easily, and being as little as possible exercised about anything. He is not the man who little consults his road-map, is little interested in communications from the place to which he is going, and who, passing through an enemy's country, sees but little evidence of danger anywhere, and finds the proof of the world being improved in the monuments of the prophets built by the children of their persecutors. These are they who naturally take the distracted state of Christendom as an infallible argument of the uselessness of expecting positive certainty about anything beyond a few cardinal points of doctrine, and who yet think Scripture plain enough for all practical purposes. No! it is deep enough to exercise thoroughly every earnest student of it, and profitable for the "man of God" alone.

And how many are the men of God? How many are they who are set absolutely to follow all that Scripture sets before them, and never balk the light because it searches them too much? The "secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him" thus, and none of these will find Scripture disappoint them. But they will find it immensely large, and ever beyond them,—leading them on, therefore, to the invisible, the heavenly, the eternal; while giving them practical wisdom without limit with regard to all that meets them by the way.

Christian reader, is this your character? and how does your experience agree with this?

It is no wonder then that what the apostle appeals to the Corinthians by, against their divisions, is the Name of a common Lord,—that name upon which they call as owning subjection to Him whose name it is. We find directly how far they had gone astray from the simplicity of this obedience; even to the ranging themselves as disciples under the various teachers which God had given them, as one of Paul, and one of Apollos, and one of Cephas, and one even—as if putting His teachings in contrast with those of His (even inspired) servants—of Christ Himself! How many since have sought to make such a distinction! perhaps to refer us for *their* creed to the "sermon on the mount"! And one whole school of recent date, among the many monstrous births with which the degenerate universities of Protestant Germany have afflicted the church, has for its cardinal principle the opposition of Paul to Peter, and Peter to Paul, from a compromise between whose followers came the Catholic church! There is no need for us at present to concern ourselves with such grotesque heresies, and it will be of more profit to think of things that more nearly touch ourselves. We

my brethren, by those of [the house of] Chloe, that there are strifes among you. Now I speak of this, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of °Apollos, and I of ᵖCephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?

o Acts 19. 1.
p Jno. 1. 42.

no doubt believe that all the inspired writers are to be listened to as the mouthpieces of the Spirit of God alike; whatever may be the differences in their respective lines of testimony. It is to be feared, however, that for most of us some of these have written almost in vain. The want of balance of truth may thus be very great, and the result more than a defect in knowledge. Scripture is a living organism, in which each member ministers to the rest, and if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. Prophecy roots itself in history, which again is the birthplace of every great doctrine. Doctrine controls and models practice. To suppose that any part of the word of God may be slighted with impunity is to come near to accusing God of having spoken idly in it; and it is not the knowledge of it, but the want of knowledge—its power and preciousness not being realized in the soul, that makes men ready to yield it up to the unsparing hands of the (falsely called) "higher critics," whose every effort is to debase what they do not understand.

But this works also in other ways which may once more come closer home to us. What is it that makes people sit at the feet of men who can be but, at best, interpreters after an imperfect fashion of a book which is in all our hands, and the One infallible Interpreter of which is given to all Christians, with deference often abject to the authoritative exposition of those who know, or ought to know, as those occupied so much with the things of the world, and destitute of needful training, cannot be expected to do? Let it not be thought that it is meant that we can receive no help from teachers; or that there is not to be a due recognition of whatever help the Lord would give us. His way is to use us to one another, and the pride of independency is sure to reap its reward. But the opposite error is at least no less; it is a false, because extreme, confidence in any teacher, however pious, however gifted, which as little really honors the teacher as it even establishes in the teaching, or builds up the soul therefore before God. Such disciples of men are like a house upon the sand, when the storm of trial comes; while, as the Lord says, "He that heareth *His* words and doeth them," his house shall not fall, because it is founded upon a rock. And be it the truth one builds on, but receiving it as the word of man, without having searched out all before God, except His mercy avert, the sand that is over the rock may cause its fall as easily. Who that is a teacher indeed can be satisfied with less than divine authority for himself, or therefore allow others to be satisfied with less? The mind may wander through imaginative realms of fancy at its will, but the conscience is that which has to do with God alone, where no one of us all can answer for another. Yet how many grow up in the faith of their parents simply, without ever having examined it! or in the creed of a church certified to them by a multitude of respectable names, and thus are walking by the faith of others, and not their own! And thus we have come with the weight of centuries upon us, down to a systematized Corinthian condition, in the easiest and most natural way possible to be imagined. Alas, too natural; what more so than for Abraham to desire to carry his father with him into Canaan? Yet he only kept himself out of it till his father died. And we, what wonder that we have not much need of a text to teach us how to know of the doctrine, we who succeed to our fathers' doctrines just as to any other part of their estates, and would think it a dishonor to their memories to act as if we were wiser than they, except as perforce we are carried on with the progress of the generations, mostly scientific as it is, and thus are compelled to realize that Darwin has come, and Darwinism in religion, while they and Moses had the misfortune to live before his time.

One would think that this principle of science with its professed call for "verification," would suggest at least no less than the verification by our

Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized to the name of Paul? I thank my God that I baptized none of you, except [q]Crispus and [r]Gaius, in order that

[q] Acts 18. 8.
[r] Rom. 16. 23.

manual of instruction, of all that we hear from those who professedly are teaching from it; but men are men, and sinuosity still marks "the worm Jacob's" course. How many verify their scientific text-books? And in religion, how shall these hard-worked business men sit down to verify the sayings of those whose business is to give out that which by long labor they have acquired? They may change their teacher, if they are unable in the main to go with him; but the method is harder to change. Until, indeed, the invisible things become for them the deepest realities, and the spoon fashion of feeding no longer is found to meet the demands of a sturdier life.

With the Corinthians things had not gone on in any wise so far as this, but the same causes were at work, and the people of God were already becoming such or such a teacher's people. The apostle meets it with the utmost vigor, according to his wont. "Is Christ divided?" he asks: are His words in contradiction to those inspired by the Spirit since He went on high? "Was Paul crucified for you?" so that you should be the people of Paul? "Or were you baptized to the name of Paul?"—as people are baptized into this or that church now. "I thank my God," he adds, "that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, that no one may say ye were baptized to my name. And I baptized also the house of Stephanas; for the rest, I know not if I baptized any other."

"Under the old dispensation," says Hodge, "whenever any one professed Judaism, or entered into covenant with God as one of His people, all his children and dependents, that is, all to whom he stood in a representative relation, were included in the covenant, and received its sign. In like manner, under the gospel, when a Jew or Gentile joined the Church, his children received baptism and were recognized as members of the Christian Church." I quote this because of some common but important errors in it, which need to be separated from the truth which is contained.

The "baptismal covenant" is a very common doctrine in much of Protestant theology; having its main support from its analogy with the Israelite "covenant of circumcision" by which the "seed of Abraham according to the flesh" stood in acknowledged relationship to Jehovah, their covenant God. But while conceding fully the analogy, we have carefully to remember the difference between a nation in the flesh and under a covenant of law, and the Church as the Body of Christ, indwelt of the Spirit. Into this Church no ordinance can bring, but the baptism of the Spirit only (chap. xii. 13). The confounding of this with water-baptism, and of the Body of Christ with the Kingdom of heaven is one that has led largely to the ritualism with which the professing church is afflicted to-day, and from which the Reformers themselves, with but a few exceptions such as Zwingle, were by no means fully delivered. But while there was a "throne of the Lord" in Israel, where Solomon sat as the viceroy and representative of a higher power (1 Chron. xxviii. 5; xxix. 23), the sign of whose Presence was the Glory over the ark of the covenant in the innermost holy place, yet the difference is even thus apparent. And if Israel were thus a kingdom of the Lord, and might have been, had they stood to the terms of their covenant, "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6) in nearer relationship, yet members of the Body of Christ they never were—not even that remnant according to the election of grace which has been ever among them. To urge, as so many do, that they were the "assembly," (or "church") of the Lord, as we are, is to mistake the whole matter, and substitute a false issue for the true one. The question is in no wise one of the assembly of the Lord simply, which no one could deny them to have been, but of "the assembly which is *His Body*" (Eph. i. 22, 23), which could not exist before there was a Head in heaven, or a baptism of the Spirit to form the Body. The Kingdom it is which, in whatever different forms, existed,

no one may say I have* baptized to my name; and I baptized also the house of [s]Stephanas; for the rest, I know not if I baptized any other. [s] ch. 16. 15, 17.

* Or, "ye were:" authorities are about equally divided.

and exists all through; and in Israel the house of God was its centre; *in* the Kingdom, but of course distinct from it. And so again, the Church is now the House of God by the indwelling of the Spirit; *in* the Kingdom, but distinct from the Kingdom. It is only the confusion between Israel as the assembly of the Lord, and the assembly which is Christ's Body and the House of God, that makes this other confusion between the Kingdom and the Church. And it is true that "He hath made us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father," as the book of Revelation says (chap. i. 6, R. V.); but this is another of the many blessings which are ours in Christ.

This distinction clear makes clear many another thing. It is on this lower ground that Israel and the Church are in some sense one. It is here that the analogy between circumcision and baptism finds its justification, and the whole ritualistic argument as to the latter is swept away. Baptism is into the Kingdom, not the Church; it is, as we have elsewhere seen, one of the keys of the Kingdom (see Matt. xvi. 19, *notes*), and one of the modes of discipling into that which is a kingdom of truth (Matt. xxviii. 19, *notes*). On this ground all the blessing is governmental, conditional, and (however it may look on to eternity,) secures nothing there. It is a remission or washing away of sin which is hypothetical necessarily, as done by those who cannot know infallibly the hearts of those who come to their baptism, and cannot cleanse those whom God has not cleansed; any more than the water which they use can cleanse the soul (see Acts ii. 38, *notes*). Nor does God work magically, as men would have Him, by means unsuitable to the nature He has given us.

If we understood that baptism is just the solemn admission to the Lord's school on earth, the difficulty as to the admission of a believer's house to this along with himself would be at an end; and the reason would be apparent for the distinction to be made between the child and the adult. God would of course have reality, and he who owns Christ Master and Lord, coming to sit at His feet and learn of Him, must come in faith or he does not come; while on the other hand the arms of divine love are ready to encircle the babes brought to Him, and His own word bids those to whose responsibility they are committed to "bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord:"—that is, as disciples. Thus the assurance that "of such is the Kingdom of heaven" is as plain as need be and as encouraging as plain. There is no bringing into a place those who have no proved fitness for it; no bringing into the professing church at all; while in complete harmony with the principles announced by God in Abraham, the family ties are owned of God in blessing wherever a faith like his may lay hold of the promise, "Bring up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Here therefore, the apostle plainly distinguishes between the only two of the assembly at Corinth whom he had baptized—"none of *you*, except Crispus and Gaius;" while of the baptized households he had baptized but one, as far as his memory served—"the house of Stephanas." Here it was not so important to remember; for it was not the children who were distracting the church by their divisions. It was sufficient, therefore, to say here, "for the rest, I know not that I baptized any other."*

* "The household of Stephanas" of whom we read at the end of the epistle that they had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," seems to be the servants, the word being different,—*oikia*, and not *oikos*. "They that are of Cesar's household"—*oikia*, Phil. iv. 22—were not his children; while all the cases in which the children are plainly intended the word is *oikos*.

SECTION 2. (17-31.)
The Cross in its twofold aspect.

1 (17-21): The power of the gospel.

1. FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but [t]to preach the gospel; not with [u]wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void; for the word of the cross is to those that are [v]perishing, foolishness; but to us who are being [w]saved, it is the power of God; for it is

[t] Col. 1. 23.
[u] ch. 2. 1, 4, 13.
[v] 2 Cor. 2. 15.
[w] Rom. 1. 16.

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The apostle now enters at once upon his theme, Christ, unknown by the world, the cross His emblem, whom it was impossible to commend to the world, therefore, by any means other than the "demonstration of the Spirit" to the convicted soul. Yet this Cross is at once the inlet of all wisdom to him who understands it,—the knowledge of itself and of God; the actual meeting of the need which it has discovered. Thus it is true wisdom,—not that barren wisdom of the world which fails man just where needed most, but that which under the severest test becomes the most conspicuous.

1. The apostle's disclaiming here of being sent to baptize is in perfect harmony with what has just been said of the connection of baptism with the Kingdom rather than the Church. Certainly those who received their commission from the risen, but not yet ascended Christ, could not have spoken in this way. Sent to baptize they were, and by Him who grounds it upon all power committed to Him, that is, upon the Kingdom that is His (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19). He who was distinctly sent from Christ in glory, and declares himself to be in an especial manner the minister of the Church (Col. i. 25), to whom was committed the administration of that till then unknown mystery (Eph. iii. 6–9), expressly denies baptism to have a place in that distinct commission! And this is the more noteworthy, because with regard to the Lord's Supper, which he might have received, like baptism, from those who were apostles before him, but which is plainly connected with this administration, he says emphatically that he had "received from the Lord" that which he delivered to them: this too in this very same epistle in which he denies his having received baptism in this way from Him, and which is an epistle for the authoritative regulation of the Church on earth (chap. xiv. 37).

But he was also minister of the completed gospel (Col. i. 23); and this is what he turns to speak of now. Christ had not sent him to baptize, but to preach the gospel—the glad tidings of a love now going out towards all, and in which his own heart went out in sympathetic gladness. Yet here it was the word of the Cross he carried, an ominous word of humiliation, suffering and penalty endured; and which, if endured for men, yet declared their condition who could be saved only by such a sacrifice. Here, therefore, no mere wisdom of words would suffice. That would be ignoring the very condition for which the Cross was alone the remedy. It was not a mere misunderstanding which wise words would remove, but a heart away from God which had declared itself in face of the wondrous revelation of God in Christ: men have both seen and hated both Christ and His Father. And men, according to Scripture, are the same everywhere; this condition is not an exceptional one, but, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

What use, then, of mere appeals to man, when Christ has Himself appealed, to get no answer but the Cross? The very "word of the Cross is to those that are perishing foolishness;" while indeed to those who are being saved "it is the power of God." Yes, the power of God; but then this alone can be trusted to work in it. The wisdom of the wise is brought to an end; the understanding of the man of understanding set aside: did any of them, with whatever wisdom they might have, excogitate the gospel? or produce any equivalent to the gospel? They had had ample time to do it, if they could. The nations

written, [x]I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and set aside the understanding of the understanding ones.
Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this age? Hath not God made [y]foolish the wisdom of the world? For when, in the [z]wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe.

2 (22-25): Yet the cross an offence to the Jew, a folly to the Greek.

2. Since the [a]Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews an [b]offence and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those

x Isa. 29. 14.
y Isa. 44. 25.
z Lk. 10. 21. Rom. 1. 22.
a Matt. 12. 38.
b Isa. 8. 14. Rom. 9. 32.

that had once known God, had, in fact, spite of that knowledge, glorified Him not as God, nor been thankful for the knowledge, as the apostle tells the Romans; and this was the secret of the idolatry which covered the earth with hideous forms, the reflection of the lusts which warred in their members. What could be expected of those who had thus turned their backs on God, and conjured up gods not to meet the need of conscience, but to satisfy the impulses of their depravity?

God indeed, as we know, never left Himself without witness,—never meant to leave man to the mere blind gropings of a darkened intellect. Apart from the witness of external nature which is everywhere, somewhere the light was shining all the time. In the midst of the most cultivated nations of antiquity, and at the headquarters of their commercial traffic,—in close intimacy with Egypt, (upon whose bestial gods was executed once a judgment which resounded far and near,)—and in turn with Phœnicia, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, there was a people who held in their hand the revelation of God, progressing with the onward march of the generations that went by. But this was not what they craved or would receive. Thus in the self-chosen darkness their wisdom ripened till in Greece, the land of the typical Gentile, in the midst of those who professedly sought after wisdom, it produced its fairest blossoms and its ripest fruits. The wisdom of God was pleased to give ample time for the development. As in Israel under law it was to be proved that man was without strength and ungodly, so amongst the Gentiles was it to be proved that the world by wisdom knew not God. Then, when the need was fully shown, which could not else be met at all, "it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching"—not of preaching as a method, but of the thing preached in human estimation—"it pleased God to save those that believe."

2. Not merely to Gentile philosophy, which in its very designation was a "pursuit of wisdom," but to the legal Jew no less, the cross was naturally the very opposite of what he looked for. The Jew, as we see in the Gospels, demanded signs—significant wonders. And such indeed was the Cross, the mightiest that could be; but what child of the law could accept one in which the law itself was against the sufferer,—the curse of the law upon him? Doubtless they had read of One despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, upon whom Jehovah laid the iniquity of others, and with whose stripes they are healed. Yes, but was not that Israel suffering for the sins of the world? So have they turned the edge of conviction from themselves to weave out of texts like these a subtle web of self-righteousness in their own defence. But how indeed could they think of their glorious Messiah as in the place of one made an offering for sin? How little could they imagine that in all this reasoning they were but fulfilling the prophecy they were perverting, —"He was despised, and we esteemed Him not!"

The reason why to the Greeks it was foolishness was at bottom the same—intense blindness as to man's condition and the enormity of sin before a holy God. Their gods came down to earth indeed, and in forms lower than the human; but it was in pursuit of their own lusts and passions, as vehement and

who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is more powerful than men.

3 (26 31): The manifestation in Christ of fulness for human need, to the glory of God.

3. For consider your calling, brethren, that not [c]many wise according to the flesh, [d]not many mighty, not many noble [are called], but God hath [e]chosen the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are mighty; and the ignoble things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen,* things that are not, that he might bring to naught things that are, that

c Jno. 7. 48.
d Matt. 11. 25.
e Rom. 3.27.

* "And" has good support; but is probably to be omitted.

unrestrained as any that could be found in man. Here was a setting forth of "new gods" indeed, which at once proclaimed a new estimate of sin, and swept aside under its condemnation all their rabble of dishonored deities. Were indeed all these to be replaced with that gaunt Figure of rejection and death, outcast by these contemptible Jews themselves?

But if such then were the message, what hope in announcing it? None but in God's new-creative call, the call of the gospel certainly, but the gospel made good in the soul by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit. Many heard and hear the universal gospel-call, only to reject it; but to all those called according to the word of the apostle here, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is a call effectual as God can make it,—"not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 5); the result being a veritable new birth: for we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23, 25).

Thus the "foolishness of God"—what with men may be considered that—approves itself by its blessed fruit in those in whose hearts, opened by divine grace, it has been received effectually, an incoming of light and joy and peace which nothing else can avail to bring. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men," whatever may be the form of the philosophy he favors; and the "weakness of God,"—Christ "crucified through weakness,"—"is more powerful than men."

3. If such then is the true character of world-wisdom, such its contradiction to all that is genuinely this, it is but the consequence to be expected, that the calling of God will not be characteristically of those wise according to the flesh, or mighty, or noble. He has, in fact, put upon the most conspicuous developments of the world-spirit the brand of His reprobation. He chooses the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and its weak things to shame its might, and things ignoble and despised, things that are naught in men's eyes, to bring down to naught all things in the world together, that no flesh may glory in the presence of God. Alas, it is this "great Babylon that we have builded" that exalts man to his shame, and drives him out in result among the beasts that know not God, to be more bestial than they. We must accept this abasement that God may be able indeed to exalt us, and enrich us in our poverty with the riches of One self-impoverished to enrich us. In this way man is blessed indeed, and God is glorified.

We who believe are in Christ Jesus,—filled up in all His fulness; and the wisdom which here we find manifests itself as truly that by its power to meet and put away all the disastrous consequences of the fall, and bring in an overcompensation of blessing that is indeed divine. And this is what the form of

no flesh may glory before God. But of him are ye [f] in Christ Jesus, who was made to us [g] wisdom from God, [h] righteousness, as well as [i] sanctification and [j] redemp-

[f] 2 Cor. 5. 17.
[g] Eph. 1. 17.
[h] Isa. 45. 24. Jer. 23. 6. Rom. 5. 19.
[i] Jno. 17. 19; Rom. 8. 2.
[j] Eph. 1. 7.

the sentence here conveys; "righteousness, as well as sanctification, and redemption," being the distinguishing blessings that are found in the wisdom that is from God, and which manifest its truly divine character.*

It will be found also upon examination that the words stand in the order needed to bring out their relation to the fall; to that, let us remember, which began man's pursuit of wisdom, away from God. Still, "vain man will be wise, though he be born a wild ass's colt." No wonder if he should sadly lose his way. Yet in all this, supreme above it all, God works out His purposes of blessing, using even the evil itself to do so. For, if wisdom were hoped for by man from the knowledge of good and evil, this (which indeed was always designed for him by God, and which he had no need to take from Satan) is in fact overruled in such a way as to give him the deepest possible apprehension of these that (one may suppose) the creature could have; and thus, in the redeemed, to bring about a fuller conformity to the mind of God, than perhaps a being unfallen could attain. No angel could in this way ' by reason of use have his senses exercised to discern both good and evil." And the very presence of the evil in us after new birth is a fact whose import seems to lie in the same direction.

At the best, a wisdom of this kind could not, however, by itself solve any one of the most serious questions which perplex men, and will perplex them, apart from revelation. And this is what distinctly the book of Ecclesiastes is designed to show. Wisdom there is the object of the most earnest search by one who had special human wisdom given him by God, so as to be wiser than all men beside; and with riches and power back of it all, to carry out, as far as man might go, his experiments. But the wail goes up from this eager seeker of what he prized and longed for: "I said I will be wise, but it was far from me." Death baffles him. The seal upon a fallen condition cannot be broken by that which induced the fall. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward? or the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? . . . As thou knowest not the way of the spirit . . . so thou knowest not the works of God that worketh all." Revelation must come in then; and here what joy to realize how it has indeed come in!

Christ is made unto us wisdom from God; and thus with Christianity, for faith, every cloud is lifted. The wisdom that is from God is a casket of priceless jewels; in which the redeemed one finds, not only liberty, but marvelous enrichment. How much is contained in just those three words, "righteousness, sanctification and redemption!" And they are in an order of progressive fulness, as we shall see, by which we enter more and more into the heart of God.

Righteousness is the first need of the sinner, and which we see symbolically met in that robe which death furnished to cover the nakedness which was the first felt need in Eden. "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Yet God had made him naked, not like any beast of the earth with its protective covering, but safe in the purity of his uprightness, open to the light and not ashamed. How all was altered now! The consciousness of guilt was upon him: the law of sin was already in his members; and God Himself recognizes the impossibility of restoring that lost innocence; he must have a covering, and a better one than any that he can invent with all his power of invention. Who could imagine that death, the penalty upon him, was to be that which should provide him with this? Yet we know that this is indeed the truth. The penalty must be endured, if the sinner is to be justified before God. Righteousness for him is not in any impossible work of his hands, or new life lived, but

* So the margin of the R. V., though ungrammatically, "both."

tion; that as it is written, [k]He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

[k] Jer. 9. 23, 24.

in the first place by the death of Him of whom all the sacrificial law spoke—whom it foreshadowed. The blood of the sacrifice—token of the life poured out—was that which was offered to God for the acceptance of the offerer; and we are thus "justified by His blood," every charge against us is refused, His resurrection from the dead being the assurance of the demand met, and thus the public sentence of justification of every one that believeth in Jesus.

But this is negative merely,—there is no imputation of guilt, and that is all; and it is not all that God has done for us; we have not in this yet reached the *robe* of righteousness, which death indeed must obtain for us, but which goes beyond the mere putting away of sin, and gives us a positive standing in the presence of God. Christ is not merely negative but positive righteousness to us. We stand in Him, in the value that He has for God, who has achieved, not merely for us but for Him also, that which has glorified Him in all His attributes. In His death all that we were by nature and practice both was branded and set aside,—"our old man crucified with Him,"—and we are accepted in the Beloved, in that unchangeable perfection which is His, living because He lives. He is the Priest that offered for us, to whom belongs the skin of the burnt-offering (Lev. vii. 8); and here we are brought back as it were to Eden, to see whence those skins that covered the first sinners of mankind were derived. How from the beginning did the eye of God contemplate the coming Redeemer in His sufferings and the glories that should follow!

Yet, however wonderful this righteousness, more is needed and more provided for us in Christ. God could not merely cover the nakedness of a sinner, while leaving him still the sinner that he was before. Man fallen was corrupt as well as guilty; and Christ is made unto us not only righteousness but also sanctification.

Now sanctification is spoken of in two different ways in Scripture: we are sanctified *positionally*, and we are sanctified *practically*,—by the blood and by the Spirit of Christ; as the blood with the oil upon the blood consecrated the priest of old (Ex. xxix. 20, 21). Positionally, as is evident, it is the blood of Christ which has set us apart to God. And this is what sanctification means, setting apart to God. The Lord thus speaks of sanctifying Himself when He is going to take a new position as Man with God: "For their sakes," He says, "I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John xvii. 19). This was no spiritual change in the Lord, which it were blasphemy to think; it was simply a new place that He was taking for us Godward. Upon this too our sanctification, positionally and practically, depends. He is gone in to God as Man. Entitled ever to such a place by virtue of all that He was. His own personal perfection, He is now gone in for men; and therefore, "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12). Thus He enters as our Representative, and the blood that He has shed sets us apart, or sanctifies us, to God, in the power of His finished work, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (chap. x. 10). Thus the *conscience* is effectually purified, the worshiper once purged having no more conscience of sins (ix. 13, 14; x. 2); a thing how absolutely necessary for practical sanctification, for which we must be near to God: *there is no possible place of distance from sin but in nearness to God.*

Practical sanctification has its two factors in the new birth, and the operation of the Spirit through the Word upon the believer, taking of the things of Christ to show them to him. In new birth Christ is our life, and thus we have a nature capable of responding to the Word ministered to it, although still and ever the Spirit's work is necessary to make the Word good in the hearts of the children of God.

But being born again, it is Christ once more, as apprehended by the soul in what He personally is, and in the place in which He is, who is the power for

SECTION 3. (ii.)

The revelation by the Spirit, of things beyond mere human knowledge.

1 (1-5): The power of the word preached, that of the Spirit.

1. AND I, when I came unto you, brethren, came not with excellency of word or wisdom, announcing the testimony* of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, except [t]Jesus Christ and him

[t] 2 Cor. 13.4.

* Some MSS. have "mystery."

sanctification. And herein is the wisdom of God in Him fully and wonderfully displayed. He who has put away our sins and set our consciences at rest in the presence of God, has thus laid hold upon our hearts, and won us for Himself and for God, revealed in Him, for ever. Christian life—what only can be called so—is thus love's free and happy offering to Him who has loved us: "He died for all, that they which live should no more live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for us, and rose again."

Let us notice that "*rose again*;" for if our hearts are thus Christ's, where *is Christ?* In heaven. And where then are our hearts? That is the power for practical holiness, an object—*the* Object—for our hearts outside the world, outside the whole scene of temptation and evil. We have not to look about in the world, to see what of good we can perchance find in it: Christ is in heaven. Holiness is for us by heavenliness. How simply and in what perfect wisdom has God provided for us by the power of an absorbing affection, the Object withdrawn from us, outside the world, and becoming thus the goal of a pilgrim's heart and a pilgrim's steps!

And now, finally, what is "redemption"? This is the last of the three things found, according to the apostle, in this wisdom of God in Christ. What then is redemption? It is God's love acting from itself, and for itself, to satisfy itself at personal cost, in getting back that which has been alienated from Him, and which yet He values. It is more than purchase, or even repurchase; for this might be, not because of its value to myself, but to give it away again, or for some other reason. But redemption is for oneself, the getting back for oneself what one's own heart values,—the value of which is known by the price that one is willing to pay for it. Redemption brings out thus *the heart of the redeemer.*

And in Eden, amid all the goodness with which he was surrounded, man, taught of Satan, had learned to suspect the goodness of God. There and then he had lost God: for He is not God, if He is not good. Since then, naturally, "there is none that seeketh after" Him,—that believes there is anything in Him for which to seek Him. Natural religions are religions of fear and self-interest only, and men's gods are the image of their own corruptions. God must reveal Himself; and how gloriously has He done this! Not goodness merely to man innocent in Eden, but infinite love to those who in Christ could see and hate Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." Christ is the redemption-price that shows the heart of the Redeemer; this wondrous gift, the Father's heart told out in transcendent righteousness, and holiness, and love.

Nor can we forget that redemption has yet to show its power in the transformation of the body itself; that in the image of Christ fully we may enjoy the blessedness that is ours in Him for ever. Then indeed shall he that glorieth glory in the Lord; and the full blessing of the creature shall be found when He alone is glorified by all.

Sec. 3.

Having thus shown Christ to be the fulness of divine wisdom, the apostle goes on to speak of the Spirit as the only revealer of Christ, and of spiritual things, as well as the only capacity for the apprehension of them. A very clear statement is given of inspiration, such as we find it in Scripture, the fullest as-

crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my word and my preaching was not in persuasive words of* wisdom, but in the [m]demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

m 1 Thess. 1. 5.

2 (6-9): The testimony of the Spirit to a hidden wisdom.

2. But we speak wisdom among the [n]perfect: but a wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God [o]in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom] which God determined before the ages unto our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but,

n Phil. 3.15.

o 1 Tim. 3. 16.

* Some MSS. insert "human."

sertion of it to be found: not even the words used are taught by human wisdom, but by the Spirit of God; an assertion, certainly, although questioned, of an inspiration that is, in some sense, "verbal."

1. The testimony of God committed to the apostle was, then, as to the whole matter of it, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He was determined to "know" nothing else: here was his sole occupation and delight. He does not say or mean that he knew nothing but the Cross. The crucified One is a theme wider than the Cross; though that indeed is to every eye divinely opened the display of an infinite glory. But Christ in His full reality is, in fact, the Centre of light, the full revelation of God, the Truth, by which every thing passing for truth is to be tested. The mind that is wholly filled with Christ is not contracted, but enlarged to its uttermost capacity. If He is the wisdom of God, it must of course be so.

Nevertheless He was the Crucified; and the apprehension of this gave peculiar character to the apostle's ministry. He had come among the Corinthians in the consciousness of his own impotence, along with the sense of the gravity and importance of such a message. He was with them, therefore, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. Instead of trusting to persuasive words such as human wisdom would have taught him, he relied entirely upon Him who was come to glorify Christ in the world, so that his preaching was in the demonstrative power of the Holy Spirit. Thus he would have their faith to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. How blessed a result, when this is indeed so! How impregnable must be the faith that stands in the power of God! This was no question, as is plain, of the truth itself—of their getting that; but of how they got it; whether from God Himself by having to do directly with Him about it, or from man merely, apostle though the man might be. This has been already spoken of; but how necessary that it should be insisted on! With all the care that such an one as Paul had manifested in this way, yet how much was coming in now that was swaying them from the truth! Can we wonder then at what we find to be the condition of things to-day? But shall we therefore hopelessly give way to it? or steadfastly resist it, as we know that he did?

2. The wisdom that was in his message was "wisdom among the perfect." He means to say that the maturest spirituality knew it as such: it stood all tests of heart and conscience with those who knew it best; while yet it was not the wisdom of this age, nor even of the highest, the rulers of this age, who pass and perish. They could not penetrate to the Source from which this emanated, which was also indeed a mystery, a secret now revealed, but hidden formerly, though predetermined by God before the ages, filled so much since with these perishing human thoughts. The thoughts perish, but the predetermination of God has appointed to us a glory which will not pass away. But the rulers of

3 (10-13): The revelation, realization, and reproduction of spiritual things.

as it is written, [p]Things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into man's heart, which God hath prepared for them that love him.

3. But [q]God hath revealed them to us through His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the [r]deep things of God. For who among men hath known

[p] Isa. 64. 4.

[q] Jno. 16.13.

[r] ctr. Rev.2. 24.

this age have demonstrated their ignorance of it all: they have crucified the Lord of it. Isaiah too has borne witness that the things which God has prepared for them that love Him are outside the knowledge of man naturally; strange as they are to eye and ear and even mental conception. Revelation alone can give them to us.

3. It is not meant by this then, as so many strangely quote it, that such things are still beyond our ken. The apostle immediately goes on to assure us of the very opposite of this, and of the perfect competency of the Teacher to whom now we are committed: "But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

It seems at first sight a singular expression to be used of a divine Person. We might ask with surprise, How can the Spirit of God *need* to "search" the things of God? Is He not necessarily participant with the Father and the Son in all divine knowledge? Surely, and absolutely so; but it is the Spirit *in us* that is spoken of in this way, in that blessed, mysterious working in the people of God which is at once so unfathomable a profundity and so clear a reality. It is He who works in the working of our minds as led of Him; and thus He brings us into ever fuller communion with the Father and the Son.

Are we conscious, every one of us, of this impulse within us, ever to reach out after that which is still before us,—things which, the more we learn of them, fill us with an unutterable longing to know more? It is strange that with even the mass of Christians, there seems to be little known of it. How often you hear the value of such things discounted just by reason of their "depth"! How often "too deep for me" is said with what one may call a kind of earnest levity which reveals the heart, or want of heart, behind it! Are not the revelations of Christ's love and glory of necessity attractive to those whom He has redeemed to Himself? Are any of the communications of God to His people dull and uninteresting to those who are thus recipients of His grace? Has He told out His heart with so profuse an expression as to be only tedious and unprofitable to those upon whom all this wealth of tenderness is lavished? Can Christians think slightly of communion proffered with Himself? What less or else than this is meant by the practical contentment to remain with but the slenderest knowledge of that which the Spirit of God is, if this scripture be true, continually leading us on after? We may have grieved Him indeed until His voice is well nigh silenced within us; but was it always so? Have we *never* realized such invitations to possess ourselves of what Christ has made our own? never longed to know better what, just as beyond our fullest knowledge, is ever beckoning us to enjoy it? or been aware that, if once we did so, and do so no more, this is only the unmistakable evidence of first love gone from us—of decline in our souls which it would startle us to begin to measure?

But this Spirit—indefatigable, wondrous Searcher of the deep things of God—we all of us have if Christians: for "if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And here is indeed for us—for the feeblest babes—an unlimited capacity of acquisition which it is impossible to overrate, impossible even to estimate at its full value. Well, surely, will it be to ask ourselves how far it is realized by us in practice that we have dwelling in us a Divine Person, the perfect Judge of all doctrine, the Teacher of all teachers, whose presence with us it can never be humility to forget; whom if we listen to we shall never be deceived or go astray. In this respect it becomes no question of cleverness, or in the semi-materialistic phrase of the day, of "brains," nor of mental capac-

the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? So also the *things of God hath no one known, save the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that

*Rom.11.34.

ity. The question is of eagerness of desire for, and earnestness to obey without reserve the voice of the Revealer. This it is which, if fully apprehended, brings the conscience into exercise before God, and delivers at once from all indifference as to teachers, (for the Spirit uses His instruments with us as He will,) and at the same time from all exaggerated deference to them. "Let the prophets speak, and let the rest *judge.*" The true teacher will be the first to desire to have everything searched out as before God, and judged by those Scriptures which the living Spirit has Himself indited. Thus alone will the truth taught become living truth in the soul.

"For who among men hath known the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? So also the things of God has no one known, save the Spirit of God." How worse than empty then the speculations of the wisest men as to the things of God! The spirit of man is indeed a wonderful and most important gift of the Creator, and which, therefore, God who has given it will not set aside or minimise in its own sphere. It is that by which man is distinguished from the beast, and made in the image of God. He is by it according to his creation place a son of God, as the beast is not; for God is "the Father of spirits" only (Heb. xii. 9). Thus he can recognize God, and *has* a God, in a way wholly different from the unknowing, and therefore *un*moral, and so never *im*moral, beast. God never dishonors or degrades the creature He has made, as some wild modern theorists do. He never speaks of the mind of man as an evolution from bestial instincts or faculties. He appeals to reason, even with the wicked: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18). And the unbeliever, to refuse faith, has to refuse reason also. God never advocates credulity, or applauds the man who "believes because it is impossible," and thereby puts God in contradiction to the faculties that He has made. But there are two things which reason itself should make him aware of, and which fully recognized would set him on the path of divine wisdom. Neither of these can he possibly discredit, however much he may ignore them, or evade the consequences.

First, he is a sinner; which if he denies, all his neighbors at least will acknowledge for him. Sin has morally damaged him, to an extent which it is hardly possible for him to estimate; and this must be a hindrance in the way of all right understanding, until he has found a remedy for it. The gospel is thus truly logical in treating him first of all as a sinner and inviting him to accept at the outset a remedy for this condition. This done, he will be brought into that right attitude toward God, which will alone enable him to make progress in the things of God.

The next thing is of no more difficulty than the first, that, as far as God is beyond man, so far must the things of God be, except as he is taught of God. The confused and contradictory efforts of man in this direction only illustrate and confirm the saying of Zophar, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 7, 8). But though the things that are thus in the special sense God's things, need to be revealed to man, yet in the revelation of these also God is careful not to confound his faculties: the wisdom of God is ever "wisdom" to the perfect, and not something that is "impossible," but has to be revealed none the less. He does not even, as men profess for Him, use water in a magical way to do what water was never designed to do, or change bread into a divinity for men's adoration, or justify the fetishism of superstition in any other way. He does not baffle the common instincts, perceptions, understanding of the being He has created.

we might *t*know the things that are graciously given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in *u* words taught of man's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit, communicating* spiritual things by spiritual [means.]

t 1 Jno. 2. 20.
u Matt. 10. 20.

* Or, "expounding."

But thus how marvelous a gift is that of the Spirit who searcheth the deep things of God! What dishonor must we do to such a guest when His presence is ignored or scarcely realized! when Aristarchus is but a passenger on board the vessel, of which He is the rightful supreme Ruler! (See Acts xxvii. 2, *notes*) Yet "we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are graciously given us of God."

The apostle is going on to speak of what was peculiar to the vessels of inspiration; but what he speaks of in these words is, as we know, common to us all; and by and by, he will insist upon this. But there was with such as these a special apprehension of the things of God, which the Spirit furnished. This also was for us, to whom they ministered. The apostle adds that the transmission also of what was revealed was perfectly secured: "which things also we speak, not in the words taught of man's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means."

The latter clause is sometimes translated as "explaining spiritual things to spiritual men;" this introducing to what follows, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; and looking back to the statement that "we speak wisdom among the perfect." But the apostle seems here rather to be speaking of the character of the communication itself; and this is supported by the primary meaning of the word for communicating or expounding, which is "mixing," "combining." He seems evidently to be showing us how perfectly the revelation has been secured to us; the fallibility of the human instrument not being permitted to affect that which was conveyed. The very words were guarded, as well as the matter given. How suitable is it that this should be so, when divine love and wisdom were bent upon the effectual enlightenment and salvation of men! How could we imagine that these should after all be made dependent upon an imperfect and unstable medium! that the mind of man, feeble and limited as it is, should be left to give the best expression that it could to such amazing and transcendent thoughts as are enunciated in Scripture.

But, of course, it is answered to this that, nevertheless, we find in fact the individuality of the different writers manifesting itself in their several writings; and thus an undeniable "human element" in them which needs to be accounted for. And this is continually urged as involving their being suffered to fall into such slight mistakes—or shall we say, awkwardnesses of expression?—as would prevent our arguing from the mere words used, and shut us up to insistence only upon the general idea of the thought meant to be conveyed. It has been urged that "the term here is *logos*, which denotes rather propositions than mere 'words.'" But we need not contend for its applying to "mere" words. There is never absent from *logos* the idea of reason in the words, or, as Trench says, "The orderly linking and connecting together in connected discourse of the inward thoughts and feelings of the mind." This is no loss, but gain to the apostle's statement, to find that it claims the whole rational utterance of the divine revelation by the inspired writers to be taught not of human wisdom, but of the Spirit. It should be plain that this involves no less than the choice of words, wherever the words are not most perfectly synonymous. It is as plain that we may as much insist upon the actual words as if they were given (as it is not necessary to hold) by direct dictation. God certainly used the "human element," as He used the humanity of the Lord Jesus, not to be further from us, but to be nearer to us; we need not shrink from the full acknowledgment

4 (14-16): The incompetency of the natural man.

4. Now, the natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually

* Literally, "psychical;" see notes.

of it in this way. He fitted for His purpose the vessel that He used, and used it frankly for all for which He had fitted it. He uses man, therefore, as man, not as a mere pen in His hand,—not as something passive as that might be, but rather quickened to fullest activity; all faculties in fullest exercise, as well as in perfect freedom, energized, not crippled, by that which lifted the Spirit-moved man beyond his common self, often without the consciousness of what was moving him, or that anything was. An apostle might even for a time "repent" of having written what was nevertheless an inspired letter (2 Cor. vii. 8). Who can doubt that thus the divine Maker can use the being He has made; not to the injury or repression of any part of it but the reverse; yet so as to make it entirely His own? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

This, then, is what is meant by an inspired utterance. We may debate with very little result the manner of God's working. The finished product is that which very much more concerns us, although that which we can learn as to His ways has unfailing interest and profit for us. But the great matter for us now is, have we in inspired Scripture, as God gave it to us, something that we can wholly trust and build upon as that which will never fail us? If the human element confessedly in it is to assume such character and proportions as to make it necessary to be constantly sifting the chaff from the wheat,—if we are to sit over it as judges before we can bow to it as judging *us*,—if we need specialists to point out to us how many hands were at work in every document, how much patching and revision and modification of various kinds has taken place in that which has come down to us as the work of Moses, or of Isaiah, or of Paul,—if it can be proved that the writers made mistakes upon most subjects that are not directly moral or religious in their character,—if in short they are not wholly to be trusted on any point as to which we can test their knowledge,—how can we confide our whole spiritual interests with rest and assurance of heart to those who have so failed, with all their manifest claim to more than human equipment, to establish their credibility as to what this enlightened and scientific age claims to have made common knowledge?

Thank God that our Bible is not the thing of shreds and tatters which this folly asserts; and that those who have in truth of heart listened to its lessons of holy and lofty wisdom,—who know the unique glory of the Christ that it has made their own,—know that it is not. It is not by looking deeply into it that the vulture-critics, who would rend its sacred form, have discovered the disfigurements which they so eagerly point out. It is shallowness and unspirituality only that has deceived them. Still "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness;" but it will not be those who have most diligently and with heart-exercise searched the Scripture who will be persuaded that they are not, with the wisdom they have found in it, "wiser," as one of old says, "than all their teachers." The more they have examined it, the more critically they have studied even its minutiæ, the more the awe of a divine Presence has been upon them, the more the sweetness of divine love has drawn and enwrapped them. And as to the mere understanding of them, the less we are content with mere generalization, the more we look with reverent care into every detail, and weigh the import of every word, the more we attain to an apprehension of a perfection everywhere which manifests in whatever human guise the glory of the divine.

4. A warning follows here which enables us to understand the mystery of much of the so-called "higher criticism," as well as other abundant forms of unbelief in every age: "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

discerned; but the spiritual [man] discerneth all things, and he himself is discerned of no one. For [v] who hath known the mind of the Lord? who shall instruct him? But [w] we have the mind of Christ.

[v] Isa. 40. 13.

[w] Jno. 17. 8.

SECTION 4. (iii., iv. 7.)

Corinthian failure, and the testing of human work.

1 (iii. 1-9): God the true Giver and Worker.

1. AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [x] as to babes in Christ. I have given you milk to drink, not meat; for ye were [y] not able, nor indeed are ye yet able [to bear it], for ye are yet carnal. For whereas there are among you

[x] Heb. 5. 12, 13.

[y] Jno. 16. 12.

The word translated "natural," and for which we have, as far as I am aware, no satisfactory substitute, is *psychikos*, "psychical." It is an adjective formed from *psyche*, "soul," and for which some would propose a word which we have not, "soulual." We might render it freely as "soul-governed;" this is, at any rate, the force of it: the spirit of man (as that which truly makes him man and by which he is constituted naturally in the image of God) is of necessity that which should govern him. The spirit is the seat of the mind proper—of the mental and moral faculties; the soul is that of the emotions and instincts, which should be under the guidance and control of these. It is the sign of a fallen condition that the spirit has given way to the soul: the senses, passions, bodily appetites rule over the judgment, and darken it. The man is sensual, therefore carnal, though not necessarily in the grossest forms, the things of time and sense shut out God and all that is beyond the earth.

This is truly now the natural condition of man as fallen; and with this understanding of it, we may speak here of the natural man. As such the things of the Spirit are alien to him, the new-creative power of God must work in him before he can discern them. They are too remote, make too much demand upon him, stir too much his apathetic conscience. The light shines, but amid the darkness; men love the darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: the darkness is real, but it is the soul's choice for itself, not God's choice for it. He cometh not to the light, because he will not submit to the condemnation of his evil deeds. The acceptance of this condemnation is the way out of his condition, through the ready grace which is at hand to meet him.

The Spirit of God is alone able to lift man out of this ruin, and restore God and the conscience to their rightful supremacy. The spiritual man is therefore in the light, and discerns all things. That does not, of course, mean that he is omniscient, or that he has not to grow in knowledge; but he has his eyes open, and is in the light. In this condition he necessarily now becomes an enigma to the natural man. He has now the mind of the Lord,—a mind all-competent; for who shall instruct Him? We are brought into fellowship with Him, though learning but gradually things which surpass all man's powers to attain full knowledge of; still it can be said already, we have the mind of Christ. But the world crucified Him.

Sec. 4.

Thus we have seen the full provision made for the Church in the midst of a hostile world. The wisdom and power of God are ministered to them in Christ, all that would bring a cloud over the face of God for them being removed. And the Spirit of God is in them to give the power of the revelation in their souls, and to lead them into the deep things of God.

Yet, spite of all that has been done for them, the history of the Church, as we find almost from the beginning here, has been one of saddest failure. The spirit of the world was infecting them at Corinth, and the first brightness was departing from them. They were divided into parties, headed by teachers who were

emulation and [z]strife, are ye not carnal and walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not men? Who then is Apollos, and who Paul? Ministering servants through whom ye believed, and as [a]the Lord gave to each. I planted; Apollos watered; but [b]God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth [c]anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's [d]fellow-workmen: ye are *God's* husbandry, *God's* building.

[z] Gal. 5. 20.
[a] ch. 4 7.
[b] ch. 15. 10
[c] Jno.15. 5.
[d] 2 Cor. 6. 1. Heb. 3. 6.

building with bad material into the house of God. The apostle warns them of the testing that all their work would receive, and of the vanity of the world-wisdom with which they were adulterating the truth of God. The recompense would not fail to follow.

1. In view of their condition the apostle first of all would lift their eyes to Him who was the Giver of all gift, the only effectual Worker of all good in any. He was pleased in wisdom as in grace to work through instruments, which the carnal, with eyes only for the visible, might put into His place, and clothe with a halo of glory which was His alone. So, alas, with the Corinthians: with all the wisdom upon which they prided themselves, they could not be addressed as spiritual, but as carnal merely, showing the inability of the flesh to receive the things of God. They were, no doubt, Christians, but so hindered in true spiritual development as to be still mere babes in Christ. Not that a *real* babe in Christ is carnal; but the lack with them of freshness and simplicity showed plainly what the condition was,—that it was not really the sweet child-state, but disease. Yet, let us remember, they "came behind in no gift." Gifts they had, and the Gift! there was no lack of ability in any way, had not the whole spring of true energy been kept back by the incoming of that with which it could not mingle and had no affinity. This is the one secret of all lack of growth, and the state of the Corinthians has thus a most real, if the saddest importance for us. Wherever you hear the cry, "Too deep! too deep!" as to the things of God, be sure it is not the voice of Him who in the Christian "searcheth the deep things of God." Not that there are not for all, in every stage of growth, things that may be yet too deep; but the question has to be made: does this depth yet attract and draw us on to "search" it? does it charm us with a vision of glories yet unknown, and wake us to new earnestness of purpose? or is it but the cry of spiritual sluggishness that thinks all labor in such fields mere hard-handed servitude, or perhaps, but fancy-gardening, with not enough recompense in it to invite toil like this? And these are God's things, the very Paradise of God made ours, of which our hearts may yet venture to say things like these!

It is such material as this which nevertheless furnishes apt scholars in the schools of men, as we may see again by these Corinthians. It is those with no deep earnestness in the things of God who naturally yield themselves to the guidance of others, and may even learn to debate over the respective merit of their chosen teachers. The flock is not kept together, but disperses under leaders, not hearing, or but indistinctly as afar off, the one commanding Voice of the true Shepherd. To Him, in fact, they are not near enough; and that is the meaning of all sects whatever.

Paul had to adapt himself to such indeed. He had to feed them with milk, and not with meat, though doubtless they would have desired this; but they could not assimilate it. He would fain have them grow, but they could only grow by what they could digest. He must therefore take them back to the first elements, and teach them to distinguish between the wisdom of the world and

2 (10-15): The differences in the workmen and their work.

2. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master-builder, I laid the foundation and another buildeth thereupon. But let each take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay beside that which is laid, [e] which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any one build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, each

e Matt. 16. 18. Eph. 2. 20.

what was God's wisdom for them, between the power of the Spirit and the incapacity of the flesh, between the human instrument and the divine Accomplisher. Their moral condition showed indeed how little they could be trusted to receive any higher truth. In strife and emulation they exhibited clearly the manner of men; while their engrossing topic was Paul and Apollos, and not Christ. Who then were these? Servants, by whom God indeed had been pleased to bring them to faith—faith in *them?* Were not the very differences of which they made so much, differences of God's appointment, who ordered as He pleased? Paul had planted; Apollos had watered: what could have come of it, had not God given the increase? What then were these human instruments? Merely a mode of working on God's part: God was really all. And despite all differences, those who wrought thus were only fellow-workmen—*God's* workmen, who among themselves were fellows; the husbandry was God's; the building God's. What a degradation for them to forget this, and to make themselves the work of men! Yet God would not overlook or forget to recompense these laborers of His, for whom they seemed so needlessly concerned.

2. The apostle now pursues the subject of these differences, and in view of the coming recompense. But here he takes pains to show what the most real and noteworthy differences were as before God. He could well speak, whom God had given in His grace the place of master-builder, and necessarily, therefore, the gifts for the place. This was the character of the apostolic office; which was in fact to lay the foundation upon which the whole Church was to be built. There could be but one foundation, and no one could lay another; they could only build upon that which was already laid. Here there could be therefore no strife, no variance, but entire unity of purpose, so long as the aftercomer were a builder at all and not a destroyer—an open enemy. Now in building on this foundation it was not really a question of the various qualifications of the builders, so much as of the carrying on, with suitable material and workmanship, the plan and purpose of the building. It is of the Church as the temple of God that Paul is speaking here, as he says almost immediately, ordained because of the defectibility of human workmanship, to pass the test of fire—of the holiness that belongs to God necessarily—in the day of revelation, when the final results shall be revealed of all that has been wrought for Him upon the earth. What cannot stand the fire is thus unsuited to such a building, as is plain; and the difference of material from this point of view only divides it into two classes. The "gold, silver, precious stones," would abide the fire; the "wood, hay, stubble," would not. It seems evident that we have not before us in these, however, the "living stones," of which, as Peter speaks, the "spiritual house" is composed, but what we might consider more the *decoration* of the building. Nor is this of inferior importance when we consider that this is what, according to the figure, meets the eye of the occupant, and when we consider who this occupant is and is to be. Gold, which is the symbol of divine glory, was that which covered the whole temple that Solomon built: as "in His temple," says David, "all of it speaketh of glory" (Ps. xxix. 9). The gold speaks therefore of a character of things, the result of them for God, and which is fullest blessing for all His creatures; as silver speaks of redemption, the meeting of man's deepest need. The precious stones, as in the high-priest's jewelled breast-plate, or the foundations of the eternal city (Rev. xxi. 19), are the Urim and Thummim, the "lights and perfections" of Him who is the "Father of lights," the various display of the divine attributes. It is plain

man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it; because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any one's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as [f]through the fire.

3 (16-17): The Church the Temple of God.

3. Know ye not that ye are the [g]temple* of God, and that the [h]Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man

[f] Jude 23.
[g] 2 Cor.6.16.
[h] Jno. 14.17.

* *Ναος* the house proper.

how all this must be borne witness to in the work of every true workman, whose handiwork is to endure in the final temple to God's endless praise. The "wood, hay, and stubble" are more difficult to interpret, but seem to speak of what is in contrast with these: of what is simply human, though with what is to man noble and venerable, as the tree is (*xulon* is both "wood" and "tree"). Much below this is the "hay," more perishable, and the food of the beast and not of man; while the stubble is simply worthless, and fit fuel for the flame. We cannot perhaps characterize what is here more closely,* and indeed the broadest generality may be most effective for the warning which is given,—a warning deeply needed always, and now certainly as much as ever. What a reversal of much of our human judgments will be the judgment of the great day that comes!

For the work is revealed (only then perfectly) in fire, a fire to whose power all man's work must be yielded up. How needful to anticipate that judgment, ever seeking to be and work before God now, so that the light of His Presence now may manifest us to ourselves as we are manifest to Him. Apparent success, the applause of man, the inspiration of benevolent, philanthropic motives, yet Christless or antichristian, as is so much to-day,—how little will such things avail to save much specious service from the condemnation that is at hand! The sanction of antiquity, of fathers, and church-fathers, of even the conscience unenlightened by the word of God, how little will all this avail to set aside the decree of absolute righteousness and holiness of truth! One might ask with consternation, what will survive the unswerving sentence of infinite perfection upon that which is so thoroughly imperfect at the best, so positively defiled often with impure intermixture! Yet the judge is He who has taught us to take forth the precious from the vile, that we may be as *His* mouth! How encouraging is this! for this character is what will be evidenced then in these judgments of His mouth. And how tender and reassuring the apostle's words in this connection, but a little further on, "Then shall each have his praise from God" (iv. 5). That is what His love continually seeks; and what the blood-washed robes of the saints will attest in the day that they come forth with their Lord to take their destined place of rule with Him (Rev. xix. 8, 14; comp. vii. 14; xxii. 14, R. V.). And so here, there are those whose work shall abide, and who shall receive a reward; and even where the work is burned, yet if the soul has built upon the foundation, though he suffer loss, yet "he himself shall be saved, though so as through the fire." As a man escaping out of a burning house may be untouched by the flame, though the fire consume all that he has. We have no reason to believe either that this last will be true of any true saint —that is, that he will lose *all* reward. Nay, "each shall have his praise from God."

3. The apostle appeals to the Corinthians now, briefly but energetically, with regard to the character of this building, of which he has been speaking. It is

* There are two suggestive papers on this topic in Help and Food for 1894, pp. 18, 48, from which it will be seen I have derived help. Would that more would communicate what they have learnt individually from the precious Word.

destroy the temple of God, him shall God [i]destroy; for the temple of God is holy [and] such* are ye.

4 (18-23). The vanity of the wisdom of the world.

4. Let no one deceive himself. if any one thinketh himself to be wise among you in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, [j]He taketh the wise in their craftiness. And again, [k]The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain. Wherefore [l]let no one glory in men;

[i] *cf.* Rev.11. 18.

[j] Job 5. 13.

[k] Ps. 94. 11.

[l] Jer.9.23,24.

* Plural masculine: ' such [holy ones] are ye."

not a new truth that he is announcing to them, but something very well known; which nevertheless they had not in just appreciation. What a marvel of divine grace that they should be indwelt by the Spirit of God! We are familiar with it—as a doctrine, surely as much as they; has the wonder of it diminished with us? and do we need to be exhorted as to our responsibility in view of this relationship to the Supreme?

It is only here and in Ephesians that we have the Church spoken of as the temple of God; but in Ephesians this is not a present but a future thing: it "*groweth* unto a holy temple." The character of the epistle being predominatingly heavenly and so eternal, it is the eternal condition that is emphasized, while there is a present building that goes on to this. The epistles to Timothy give us more the present "house of God;" with Hebrews and Peter also in different aspects. But Corinthians (both epistles) alone speak of a present "temple." It is remarkable too, that only for the purpose of admonition is it referred to· in the second epistle to emphasize the refusal of idolatry (chap. vi. 16); here to warn against sacrilege. The destroyer is of course not a builder, but the opposite; yet ostensibly he might be that: different even from those who built with "wood, hay, stubble," for these might be after all at bottom Christians, and thus building upon the foundation, whatever the incongruity of the material used. Here the very existence of the Church is threatened; the man is an enemy, although he may own—nay, all the more supposing that he does own—some monstrous fiction as the Christ of his allegiance. Yet even Christians may require warning against the profanation of terms and names, which is as common to-day as at any time, and with the same witchery about it for too credulously confiding souls. The end is destruction none the less surely for the deception, which may have carried away the deceiver also· for "if any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy."

"For the temple of God is holy, and such (holy ones) are ye." It is plain that it is not of practical holiness that the apostle is speaking, but of that resulting from the Spirit dwelling in them,—which is indeed the power of practical holiness. The apostle presses the responsibility of those who act in presumptuous defiance of Him who has taken in grace this place of relationship to the redeemed people of God. And in this there is indeed a call for reverent and responsive recognition on their part of a grace so great.

4. But in fact the state of the Corinthians little answered to what this implied Instead of the wisdom taught of the Spirit, the wisdom of the world had seduced them. No doubt they had little realized it, and taken according to human estimate what in God's account was foolishness instead of wisdom. To be really wise they must be content to strip themselves of it all, so as to be fools in men's eyes, whose subtle cleverness was merely a craft which, according to the righteous principles of divine government, entrapped those inspired by it. Its reasonings were vain, as all must be that does not begin and end with God. How entirely beneath the divine thought for them was this glorying in men in which they were indulging! In God's intent Paul and Cephas alike were theirs, God's instruments alike for blessing to them; and why then pit

for all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or [m] life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are [n] Christ's, and Christ is God's.

5 (iv.1-7): The true responsibility and judgment.

5. Let a man so account of us as servants* of Christ and [o] stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in [p] stewards that a man be found faithful. But for me, it is a very small matter that I should be [q] judged* of you or of man's day. Nor do I

m *cf.* Rom. 8. 38.

n Rom. 14 8.

o Matt. 13. 52.

p Lk. 16.10.

q Rom. 14.4.

* ὑπηρέτης, the official servant.

them one against another as if antagonistic in their aims or interests? Nay, even the world, though they did not belong to it, belonged to them in this way: for it is a very different, and even opposite thing, to belong to the world, and to have the world belong to you: in the one case it is your master; in the other, your servant. Life too, and death, belonged to them, and with such a thought we are familiar. Things present too, and things to come: anything that could happen;—a wonderful summing up. And here is what certifies and makes all right, "ye are Christ's;" to belong to Christ is more than to have all else belong to you; and that 'Christ is God's" brings all the universe together into fulness of blessing. He who is Heir of all things is the Son of the Father; by whom and for whom also all things were created; and He who is above all created things has come down to the lowest parts of the earth to reconcile in Himself all things to God.

5. The apostle goes on to show the responsibility of the laborer to be to God, who as knowing the hearts can alone give judgment rightly, and award due praise. The differences among the workmen also were according to His good pleasure, every gift being from Him; so that there was no ground for glorying in any way.

People were to account of them as accredited servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. This last, as we have often seen, is the peculiar character of Christianity, that it is the unfolding of things until then hidden. There is no thought in it of things beyond comprehension,—of the "mysteries," or magic, rather, of sacramental ritualism. They are the "new things" of Christianity added to the old things revealed before. For such a stewardship faithfulness was a primary necessity; but to whom then was this faithfulness to be? They were not the stewards of men, but of God; what matter then about that judgment of them by men, so easily passed, so utterly uncalled for?

In fact, it was not in that character that they were then judging, but according to their own tastes and sympathies, which were sure to be all wrong, therefore. Would those in this Corinthian state favor most those teachers who were most faithful to them? The question answers itself, and now when the custom is for men to choose their own exclusive teachers, the same principle will necessarily work, and how complete is Satan's opportunity when men can choose those to whom they shall devote themselves as teachers, shutting out, as far as possible, all other ministry by which God might awaken their consciences! The apostle here manifests entire independence of all their judgment. There was no spirit of pride in him in this, but simply the consciousness of responsibility to God, and if God and man were measured together, of what account could man be? He was not careful, therefore, to justify himself to them, or as to what judgment they might pass upon him. It was man's day, the day in which he had the earth to himself; not indeed without the restraining hand of God upon him, but still in such a way that, if once faith were not active, he might preach to himself the entire liberty which he loves. As a fact, man's day will end in the judgment of God. What a thing simply to think of! The day of the Lord begins in judgment and is upon everything that is high and lifted up, upon all

even judge* mine own self: for I am conscious of nothing as to myself; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth* me is the Lord. Wherefore, [r]judge nothing before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also both [s]bring to light the hidden things of darkness and shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God. Now these things, brethren, I have in their application transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye may learn in us not [to go] beyond the things which are written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ? and [t]what hast thou that thou hast not received? But, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

r Matt. 7. 1.
s Eccl. 12. 14.
t Jas. 1. 17.

* ἀνακρίνω, refers not to final judgment, but to the preliminary examination.

that is exalted in man's wisdom, to cast it down. If this be the character of things completely in the world at large, yet amongst Christians also the spirit of it will invade them, as we see at Corinth here, if they are not self-judged before God.

As for the apostle, in that respect in which they were judging, he did not even judge himself, he did not consider himself to be able to give a sufficient estimate of his acts and ways, although he might be, and was, conscious of nothing. After all, that did not justify him. He who justified was the Lord alone. He is not, of course, in this thinking of salvation, nor does that question enter in at all. Every Christian is, as that, a man saved already, and will himself personally, as the Lord has assured us, never come into judgment, but his ways and acts will do so; and in this respect not even an apostle could be considered a fully competent judge of his own condition. It was not that he would not be exercised about it. On the contrary, as he has himself told us, he always exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, but that is a very different thing from forming an estimate of one's self as a whole, which these Corinthians were doing, putting himself into a place as compared with others. How completely will that day to come in this way reverse the judgments which we may form with the greatest assurance even here on earth!

He had, as he says, transferred these things,—made application of these principles, to himself and Apollos simply, omitting all others. There were, in fact, others, and even enemies, as we know, amongst them, as he has already hinted; but if there were a Petrine party, for instance, in their midst, he says nothing about it here. Had he done so, that might well look as if, with the one opposition between himself and Peter on one important matter, he was giving judgment against Peter of the very sort he blamed; but he does not even name those who were actually moving at Corinth, teachers of quite another character from any of these. They could hardly refuse an application to himself and to Apollos, between whom there was certainly no disagreement, and who had been, in fact, the main workers at Corinth; Paul laying the foundation and Apollos building upon it.

As to the differences between God's workers, such there really were, but not of the character to be apprehended by those in this Corinthian state; and whatever differences there were, God Himself it was who had made them. Thus they would be really judging Him. They had nothing that they had not received, and if they had received it, and thus there was a difference, how could any one glory as if he had not received it!

SECTION 5. (iv. 8-21.)
Conditions of the way.

1 (8-16): Reigning before the time.

1. ALREADY ye are filled, already ye are [u]become rich; ye have [v]reigned without us: yea, and I would that [w]ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For I think God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a [x]spectacle unto the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye prudent in Christ; we are weak but ye are strong; ye are glorious, but we in dishonor. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and wander without a home, and labor, working with our own hands. [y]Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the [z]offscouring of the world, the refuse of all things even until now. I write not these things to chide you, but [a]as my beloved children I admonish you. For if

u *cf.* Rev.3 17.
v Jno. 18 36.
w Rev.3.21.
x Heb.10.33.
y Matt.5.44.
z Lam. 3.45.
a 1 Thess.2. 11.

Sec. 5.

We now come to the conditions of the path, conditions which the Corinthians were violating altogether. No connection can be plainer in the word of God than that between a present suffering with Christ and reigning with Him by and by. If they suffered, they would also reign; but was this then, in fact, their condition? It was quite otherwise. They were refusing the place of suffering, and taking the greatest pains to escape that which should have been their real glory. The apostle calls them back to the ways in Christ which they might have seen in him, and of which Timothy would remind them,—ways which were altogether in accordance with the doctrine that he taught. In fact, how much the ways, the heart, therefore, which is manifested in them, tends to produce the doctrine. It is thus, in fact, that all heresies come in; and with that great truth of the coming of the Lord even, which brings us so sharply to the judgment of God which will then take place upon all our ways; and that is how, plainly, the Lord Himself has emphasized that men say first of all in their *hearts*, "My Lord delayeth His coming." The doctrine accordant with this is often not hard to make out, even from Scripture.

1. This, then, was the condition of the Corinthians. They were full, they were rich, they had reigned as kings, "without us," adds the apostle. It is plain that the apostles were not reigning. He would wish indeed that they did reign all together, but on the contrary, the apostles were in this respect the very last and lowest, instead of having a foremost place in the world; they were a spectacle to the world for their sufferings, nay, to angels also as well as men. How false a test, then, of a Christian's condition, is what men would call his prosperity! As to the Church in general also, how false a test would this be! The Church indeed at large has followed, as we know, the Corinthians in this way. It is reigning far more than suffering. It has exhibited in the fullest way this prudence in Christ upon which the apostle remarks here, a prudence which was employed not to avoid what would be hindrances in the way of others, but difficulties in their own way. They were full, "sated" as the word is, but of necessity they were not then in communion with the apostles in this respect, and the same test remains for us and must remain. Are we or not in communion with the apostles? They remained, as we know, until their end in martyr deaths, for the most part, just in the condition the apostle describes here. We cannot reverse that record; and if communion is something more than merely with our own time and generation, if we are to bring it up to the·

ye should have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet [ye have] not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. I beseech you, therefore, be imitators of me.

2 (17-21): Ways in Christ taught and followed.

2. For this reason, I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in mind of my ways which are in Christ, according as I teach everywhere in every assembly. Now some are puffed up as if I were not coming to you; but I will come unto you shortly if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of those that are puffed up, but the power. [b] For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye, that I come to you [c] with a rod? or in love and the spirit of meekness?

b *cf.* Rom. 14. 17.

c 2Cor. 13. 10.

apostolic standard. then what a test of our life and ways does this apostolic record become! We can see also by this, that the world would remain the world until the day of Christ. Man's day would characterize it to the end. He expected no difference. He had no such doctrine as that Christianity was to be a leaven in the world, which was gradually to change the whole condition of things. On the contrary, the Christian's course would always be one necessitating suffering. As the apostle says elsewhere: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." No doubt the general character of things will affect in measure this also, but as to the principle, it remains entirely untouched; and these instructors among the Corinthians, of whom he says that they were indeed not fathers, God had not set His seal to their work as He had to those who established that church at Corinth,—these instructors might find for themselves. also, an easy path in leading men in the way of their own wills and desires. He does not, as already said, even mention their names. He will not allow himself to be exposed even to jangle with them. God, as is implied here, was not with them, and that was enough. As a father to those whom he had begotten in Christ through the gospel, he could beseech them to be imitators of him.

2. On this account, therefore, he was sending to them now Timotheus, himself fulfilling his name, one who faithfully "honored God," and who would put them in mind, as they needed, of ways which were in Christ,—of the doctrine they had received, and he was giving to them nothing more than in this way. What he said was that they should develop in practice that which they had received. His ways he could boldly profess (and indeed it was evident) were according to the teaching which he had delivered to them. He was coming also himself. His heart plainly urged him to this, but if he came, the question which made him, we may say, hesitate, was that of the manner in which he would have to come to them. Was he to come to exercise apostolic authority and to deal with them with a rod, which God after all had given him, or was he to come as he desired, in love and in the spirit of meekness? They were puffed up, some at least, as if he would not come; but when he came it would not be the speech of those that were puffed up that would be seen, but what was the power; for the "kingdom of God," he says, "is not in word, but in power." Power must of necessity characterize a rule of God wherever it existed.

SUBD. 2.

The apostle now turns his attention to that which necessarily went with all this world-wisdom which was manifesting itself among them. It all favored the flesh, that worst enemy of the believer, from the very fact that it is that which still dwells in him and without which no power of the enemy could prevail against him. There is another thing which increases the difficulty of dealing with it, that we have to separate between flesh in its evil sense and the body

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chaps. v.–vii.)

The flesh's lusts: separation from, and remedies.

SECTION 1. (v.)

Unity to be maintained in righteousness.

1 (1, 2): A lawlessness unique among the lawless.

2 (3–5): Delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

1. IT is universally reported that there is fornication among you; and such fornication as is not even among the nations, so that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather [d]mourned, in order that he that hath done this deed might be taken out of your midst.

2. For I, as [e]absent in body but present in spirit, have

[d] 2 Cor. 7. 7

[e] Col. 2. 5.

with which it is most intimately connected, and through which it is constantly manifesting itself; and then again we have to separate it from what is proper to human nature as such, as God created it, apart from any question of the fall. This remains; and while it remains in a fallen condition, we are not by this permitted simply to ignore it. Man is still man, even though Christian, and God's appointments for man have necessarily a wise respect to his whole being as such, which it would not be safe for him to ignore. There are sins, of course, of the spirit as well as of the flesh, and we cannot identify the flesh, therefore, simply with the body; but even here, flesh, as we have seen already, characterizes the fallen condition and prompts the very sins of the spirit themselves. Thus then, while the lusts of the flesh have to be met and controlled in God's own way, we must be guided by the word of God itself, which alone can give us the true means of meeting them, the divine remedies for a fallen condition.

Sec. 1.

We have now the question of how the unity which plainly exists in the Church as the body of Christ is to be maintained in righteousness. Righteousness is, in fact, before all things necessary to be maintained. The apostle puts it first for us where he tells us that grace, if it reigns, yet itself reigns through righteousness, not setting it aside; and that we are to follow, first of all, righteousness, then "faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Righteousness is rooted, of necessity, in the very nature of God Himself, and therefore the moment it is a question of going on with what is unrighteous, we have not to think of ecclesiastical rules or of the very relationships which God has established amongst us, so far as they interfere, or may be thought to interfere with the working out of this. God must always have maintained that which suits Himself; and thus, while there are many things besides to be considered in respect to our communion with other Christians, the very first point for us is righteousness.

1. A most solemn thing is shown us in the first place here, and that is, that if Christians fall into sin, we need not be surprised if they fall lower than the men of the world themselves. At Corinth there was already among them that which could not be found even among the Gentiles; the lawlessness was complete, unique. It was the violation of nature, and of what was God's principle as to the creation itself apart from Christianity, and yet such was the state at Corinth that they were not only going on with it, but there was no sign of mourning over it at all. "Ye are puffed up," he says, "and have not rather mourned, in order that he that hath done this deed might be taken out of your midst." They might surely, if they did not know how to deal with it, have cried to God in their sorrow, and would have been heard by Him. We have always this resource, but they were puffed up instead. How soon can the Christian forget, perhaps in the very thought of that grace which breaks the dominion of sin, the very principles which nature itself should teach him!

2. But here we come to a remarkable sample of God's power over the evil, nay

already judged, as present, him that hath so wrought this thing; [f]in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye being gathered together, and my spirit with the [g]power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to [h]deliver such an one unto Satan for the [i]destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

3 (6-13) Our feast upon the sacrifice to be holy.

1 (6-8) In sincerity and truth.

3. [1] Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that [j]a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? [k]Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye

[f] 2 Cor. 2. 10.
[g] Matt. 18. 18, 20.
[h] 1 Tim. 1. 20.
[i] ch. 11. 32.
[j] Gal. 5. 9.
[k] Ex. 12. 15.

of His use of it to fulfil His own holy purposes. The man is to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. He is put into the hands of the adversary, who can now show himself plainly as the adversary that he always is. He can serve himself no longer by the sin of one who has been expelled from the Christian assembly. He has, therefore, nothing that he can do except to manifest his enmity against one who has borne the name of Christ, perhaps with the thought of driving him to despair by that which falls upon him, or, as in Job's case (one, of course, so different in himself from the person before us now), urge him into railing against God Himself. *God* uses him, on the other hand, that in the destruction of the flesh the spirit may yet be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. This is a principle which we find afterwards noted in His dealings with the Corinthians themselves, of whom, for the dishonor of the Lord's table, there were many who were weak and sickly, and many who slept. The apostle adds: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." God must manifest Himself against the sin; and if it is not to be eternally, it must be now in time; except indeed self-judgment come in, as he tells us here: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

A solemn principle this is of divine government, and as we see, it is grounded in the divine nature. If His people will not maintain righteousness, He must maintain His own righteousness as to them, while at the same time He cannot, of course, and will not, forget the grace that He is showing in Christ. The apostle tells them, therefore, that he has already pronounced, as it were, with regard to the man in question, and bids them carry out his decision, which their own consciences must need respond to, in the name of Christ their Lord, as solemnly gathered together and himself in spirit, if not in body, with them, to deliver this man to Satan. This was apostolic power, no doubt. He speaks elsewhere of his delivering the promulgators of false doctrine to Satan without any question of the assembly at all; but although with us there may lack this element of authority, God will not fail to maintain the decisions of His people when according to truth and His own nature. Thus, while the Church may perhaps not be able formally to deliver to Satan, yet the principle remains untouched in integrity for us.

3. The apostle turns now to consider the influence of this evil, permitted among them, upon the whole assembly, and the necessity of their complete separation from it, not only for the Lord's sake and for the person's sake who had sinned, but for their own sake also. He speaks of that which characterizes the Christian's life as it were a feast upon a sacrifice. "Christ our Passover," he says, "has been sacrificed for us." We are living, so to speak, upon the fruits of that sacrifice. If God has bidden us to His feast, what must be the character of such a feast? The Old Testament has already shown us in its types that leaven was to be purged away before ever men ventured to sit down to partake of the passover.

[1] How sorrowful was their glorying then! Had they not received instruction from these types of the Old Testament, with which, as we see, they were certainly familiar, and familiar too in their application to Christianity? Did

are unleavened. For our passover also, even Christ, hath been sacrificed: wherefore let us [l]celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the [m]leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

[2] (9-13): Separate from all the wicked among professed brethren, as not even from the world.

[2] I have written unto you in the epistle, not to mingle with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, nor with the covetous and rapacious, nor with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but now I write unto you not to be mingled together, [n]if any one called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or

[l] Ex. 13. 6.
[m] *cf.* Matt 16. 6, 12.
[n] *cf.* Rom. 16. 17. 2 Jno. 10.

they not know that a little leaven leavened the whole lump? Little it might be in the speech of men. When the apostle speaks thus, it is evident that every atom of leaven must be purged out in order to satisfy the mind of God. Leaven is not simply evil, but evil *allowed;* the ferment, as the thought is, of wills that are not subject to God. If such leaven be permitted in a man's own life and ways, it will of necessity characterize him as a whole. He cannot be subject to God up to a certain limit. The moment we urge a limit to obedience, we urge what is in fact disobedience, and there is no such thing with God as the allowance of such a line as this. Unleavened bread, as the apostle says here, is that of sincerity and truth. There must be whole-hearted devotedness. If we refuse obedience *anywhere,* we are disobedient. If we refuse it in one thing, this will necessarily by degrees influence all other things. So it is individually, and so it is collectively. There must be hearts that can truly desire God to search them and see whether there be any way of wickedness in them; or else there is not, as is plain, sincerity and truth. The lump with leaven in it is a leavened lump, except it be as we find it in the meat-offering of the first-fruits. In this case the action of the fire has destroyed the leaven as leaven. It is there in a sense, but not there. There is no activity of it permitted or allowed. The fire necessarily stops that completely; and it cannot be too earnestly insisted upon that such a spirit of whole-hearted devotedness of which we are speaking is necessary to the true judgment of any single thing. Otherwise, first of all, the eye by which we see is obscured, or, as the Lord would say, made evil, and: "If thine eye be evil, the whole body will be full of darkness." We cannot shut out God's light without, as far as depends upon us, shutting it out altogether. If we shut our eyes, we shut ourselves into darkness; nay, the Lord has said: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

They were, therefore, to purge out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, even as in God's sight in Christ they were in fact unleavened. Yet they would by this be a *new* lump. Thus they were *not* that, in the condition in which they stood. What they were before God was one thing. Their lives and ways did not answer to it. "Wherefore," he says, "let us celebrate the feast not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

[2] Another principle is now shown us, that in case of sin amongst the people of the Lord there is to be a more complete separation from those going on with it than there would be from the world itself,—in which, of course, this sin was everywhere. This ought not to be strange as a principle to us, for it is plain that it is the profession of the name of Christ along with it that gives the evil in this case a character all its own. Thus, he had written to them that they were not to mingle with men of this class; and yet he is not speaking of the world, whatever their various characters of sin might be, for in fact if they were to attempt this, the world was such that they would have to go out of it altogether. There would be no possibility, even, of discerning the character of those with whom they were being brought in contact. The same difficulty of application

rapacious, with such an one not even to eat. For what have I to do with judging those that are [o]without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But those that are without, God judgeth.* [p]Put away the wicked one from among yourselves.

[o] *cf.* Mk. 4. 11.

[p] *cf.* Matt. 18. 17.

SECTION 2. (vi. 1–7.)

But with no exaction, even of one's rights.

DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go for judgment before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Know ye not then that [q]the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more, then, matters of this life? If then ye have judgments as to things of this life, set those [to judge] who are of no account in the assembly. I say this to move you to shame: is it so, that there is not a wise man

[q] Dan. 7. 22. Matt. 19. 28. Rev. 20. 4.

* Or, "will judge."

is found to-day with the world, which is so largely a professing world. The principle remains untouched, but the application is more difficult. We cannot treat the professing mass according to their profession, it is so merely that; but still, when there is a manifest dishonor being done to the Lord by great opposition between profession and practice, we must, as far as lies in us, clear the Lord's name from this dishonor. In the closer circle of actual communion, of course the apostle's words have their full force. The wicked one is to be put away, not merely from the table, but *from among ourselves;* and this is to extend to the very matter of eating and drinking in such a case. We are not to mingle with them in any way. The more truly the heart goes after them, as it surely must,—God's own heart goes after them,—the more closely will the divine rule be observed, which is that upon which alone there can be His blessing. As for discipline, it is always with the thought finally of the restoration of the offender. We see in what is before us here how thoroughly this was the case even after the extreme point had been reached and he had been put away from fellowship. God used this putting away to break him down, and thus for his restoration. It would not be to be with God at all to leave out of our thoughts or hearts those whom we may have had to put away from our fellowship. God's heart never gives up His people, and our hearts should never do so; and this will give the spirit of love in all our dealings with them, while it will not make the testimony we give against their ways less decisive, but much more.

Sec. 2.

We come now to matters between the saints. The Corinthians were going to law with one another, bringing in the world to witness their sad condition and to set right amongst them the things which it was a shame should be wrong. He asks them if they do not know that the saints shall judge the world. That is, of course, in the coming day of the Lord's rule over it, but it is for this that we are being trained and educated now, and how could it be possible that those who were on their way to such a place as this could be unfit or unworthy to judge these small matters, matters in the apostle's estimation of such very small account? Do ye not know, he asks, that we shall judge angels, how much more then matters of this kind? Still, if judgments were needed as to the things of this life, those practically of no account in the assembly were sufficient for such things as that. He does not, of course, literally mean that they were to choose persons of that character, but that these were matters that did not require

among you, not even one who shall be able to decide between his brethren? but brother goeth with brother to be judged; and that before unbelievers. Already indeed, then, it is altogether a fault in you, that ye have suits among yourselves. Why do ye not rather [r]suffer wrong? why not rather be defrauded?

SECTION 3. (8–20.)

The holiness of those whose bodies are temples of the Spirit.

NAY, ye yourselves do wrong and defraud, and that [your] brethren. Do ye not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: [s]neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor rapacious, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And [t]such were some of you; but ye are [u]washed, but ye are [v]sanctified, but ye are [w]justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and [x]by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful to me, but all things are

r Prov. 20. 22. Matt. 5. 39, 40. Rom. 12. 17, 19.

s Gal. 5. 19–21. Eph. 5. 4,5.
t Eph. 2. 1,2. Eph. 5. 8
u Eph. 5. 26. Tit. 3. 5. Heb. 10. 22.
v ch. 1. 30. Heb. 2. 11.
w Rom. 5. 9.
x 1 Tim. 3. 16.

even any extraordinary spirituality and were of too little importance to require any great ability of this sort to decide them; but *they* were exposing their shame before the world. They had better suffer wrong; they had better suffer themselves to be defrauded. There was to be no exaction even of their rights. Grace does not exact. One may say, can we suffer the wrong to go on in the assembly? That is another matter. The question here is entirely of seeking our own things. If the matter is grave enough to touch the assembly, Matt. xviii. has given us the rule with regard to it. There the first effort is that which is to be characteristic of our whole course; it is to gain one's brother. That is, as already said, that which discipline aims at. It may be, in fact, for the moment, impossible to be attained; and then we have the steps needed to place any matter that requires it in the hands of the assembly. Put in their hands, it is to be left there. It is for them to say as to what will set things straight. Just because they are our own things, we are not to be judges of them. No man was ever thought to be a rightful judge in his own cause, or could take the law, as people say, into his own hands. These are principles which are surely as good for us as they can be in the world at large. They are the result simply of the knowledge, alas, of our poor fallen nature.

Sec. 3.

The apostle proceeds now to speak of the holiness which befits those whose bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. They were, in fact, acting in utter forgetfulness of this. They were not only not suffering themselves to be defrauded, they were doing wrong and defrauding their own brethren. "Do ye not know," he asks, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" and then gives a catalogue of evil works, samples only, after all, of what was in the world at large, and which certainly God would never tolerate in His kingdom. Here it is of no use pleading grace in any wise. Grace is that which breaks the dominion of sin, sets the soul right to go on with God; and if this be not the result of it, grace has not been learned at all, nor can it be pleaded as availing in behalf of those who, whatever they may profess, show themselves uninfluenced by it. This was indeed the character of some of these Corinthian saints, in a city which was proverbial for its immorality. God had brought them out; they were "washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The order and connection of these things is to be noted. The wash-

not expedient; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be [y] brought under the power of any. Meats [z] for the belly and the belly for meats, but God will bring to naught both it and them; but the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both [a] raised up the Lord, and will raise us up through his power. Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away

[y] ch. 9. 27.
[z] Matt. 15. 17.
[a] ch. 15. 20.

ing comes first, which is, of course, but the removal of the positive evil with which they were connected. Sanctification carries this on to the full setting apart to God Himself, so that the life shall be His. Justification as it is put here is evidently that which is implied in the Spirit of God taking possession of the believer as His temple. This is indeed the most wondrous justification, and could only be the result of the Lord's work in their behalf. Thus it is said "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and this applies to the whole three things. The washing was on the authority of the name of Him who is our Saviour Lord.

One need hardly say that the reference which some here find to baptism is a mistake as to one essential character of Christianity. No external washing can affect the soul. The "washing of water," as the apostle himself has told us, is "by the word." God never uses things out of the place which He has given them. This is magic, not mystery. It is a perversion of things, it is essentially evil and of Satan. The parent it has surely been of a multitude of evils. The washing of baptism is at the hands of disciples, and no disciples hands can cleanse the soul; but this is an error which has gone far and wide in Christendom.

Sanctification is here both positional and practical, as "in the name of the Lord Jesus" it implies, first of all, the power of His blood to set apart to God; but it is also by the Spirit, therefore practical and internal, the making good in inward reality what the blood has made positionally ours.

As to justification in the sense in which we have it here, we find it once again in the first epistle to Timothy, where it is said of Christ that He was justified in the Spirit, the Spirit of God as coming upon Him being the witness to His absolute perfection. His was an anointing without blood; ours, on the contrary, is because of the value of that precious blood with God. Thus, then, the soul is brought into freedom. The law has not accomplished this, and therefore he speaks for a moment here of the entire liberty from law which thus results. "All things are lawful to me" does not, of course, for a moment change eternal *moral* conditions, but has reference to restrictions which were ceremonial merely. "Meats for the belly," as he says, and "the belly for meats." As to these things, there was the fullest and most absolute freedom; and yet even here there might be things inexpedient, and the apostle refuses to be brought under the power of things that are lawful. This is an important matter for our own guidance, for it may well be that that in which we loosely allow ourselves within the range of things entirely lawful may nevertheless have a sorrowful effect upon us. We have to use everything with the wisdom of God, and in our conduct with regard to others in an especial way are not to maintain our own rights, but to seek to minister to the needs of others. These were all things, as he shows us, of a merely temporary nature. Food was necessary in the meanwhile for the life that is, but it will come to an end and that which sustains it. On the other hand, there were things,—and the Corinthians needed the warning,—things which for the heathen in his darkness had little of real evil, but which, brought once into the light of Christianity, were seen in their true character; yet, after all, the power of bad habits might revive, even in the Christian, and thus he has to warn them that the body is simply for the Lord and the Lord for the body. God has already raised up the Lord, and we are to be raised up. In the meanwhile the body will betray us, if we do not take care to govern its appetites.

the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? Far be the thought. Know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body: for the two, [b]he saith, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man practiseth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. Know ye not that your body is the [c]temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye were [d]bought with a price: glorify God, therefore, in your body.

b Gen. 2. 24.

c *cf.* Jno. 2. 21.

d Acts 20.28. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

But how wonderful that it is in the *body* of the believer that the Spirit of God has His abode! "Your *bodies*," says the apostle, "are members of Christ." This is a different mode of speech from that which we find elsewhere. It is not that *believers* simply are members of Christ, members of His body, but that our *bodies* are His members. They belong to Him and are to be used for Him. The body is in the world, that by which we maintain our connection with external things, and in which, therefore, the mind of the human spirit is manifested. Now it is the Spirit of God that has control; the body, as we have been taught in Romans, being simply to be offered up to God as "a living sacrifice, acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ." Our members are to be His members, expressing His mind in lives devoted to Him. "Shall I then," he says, "take away," as the word is, "the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? Far be the thought!" He refers to the Lord's words in Genesis to show how really this would be taking away the body from the Lord. Every other sin, he says, that a man may practise is without the body, does not compromise it in the same way. Gluttony, for instance, or any kindred thing, evil as it is of course, yet after all does not take the body away from Him, and put it in the hands of that which is contrary to Him. With the sin in question, this was in fact what was done. The man sinned, therefore, against his own body. "Know ye not," he says, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and," as the result of it, "ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price? Glorify God, therefore, in your body." There are readings here which evidently have come from the thought that this was, after all, altogether too meagre a statement; but if the body be indeed kept in this way for God, if He be glorified in it, if this be really carried out, the whole life must of necessity be His. Our life is in the body; and to have control of the body is to have the life governed for Him. Thus it may be that the *body* is spoken of as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and not the spirit as His temple, which one would rather expect. It is a triumph of divine grace indeed that here where even as yet the power of redemption is not known, for "we *wait* for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body," yet, through the work of Christ, the Spirit of God can dwell in us. How thoroughly that shows He is the witness to Christ's perfection, to the perfection of His blessed work, and not to any perfection of our own; and here, where the contact with the world is seen in the fullest way, the Spirit of God is found to deliver us from the evil influences of that contact. The anointing oil, as we may say, flows from the head down to the hem of the garment. In the Lord Himself we remember, also, that it was His *body* of which He expressly spake as the temple which, if men destroyed, would be raised up; and it is the Church as the body of Christ in which, therefore, the Spirit dwells. Here the same thoughts are found connected, in whatever different spheres. The Church is that which is to express the mind of Christ as here in the world, the Spirit of God ruling for Him, and the absent Christ thus being, as it were, manifested before the eyes of men; as the apostle says in another place, we are "the epistle of Christ, read and known of all men." Thus we can understand, also, why it is that the Church is not looked at as peo-

SECTION 4. (vii.)
Nature: how far to be yielded to.

1 (1-9): The single life and the individual in the bond of marriage.

1. Now concerning the things of which ye wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman; but on account of fornications let each [man] have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to the wife her [e]due; and in like manner the wife to the husband. The wife hath not authority over her own body, but the husband; in like

e Ex. 21. 10.

ple so commonly look at it, as partly now in heaven (in those who are its members there) and partly upon earth. The Spirit is in the Body and the Body is upon earth,—in our bodies, and that makes it decisive that death must of necessity for the time interfere with this. He that is joined to the Lord is indeed one Spirit. Through the body is the present expression of this in the world.

Sec. 4.

We now come to a question which, as already observed, is intimately connected with that of the flesh. Fallen nature is distinctly fleshly, as the Lord says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" but that is the fallen condition. We are still to distinguish from that human nature as God has constituted it, and which remains therefore to be owned as such, without forgetting how the fall has affected everything now. The apostle takes up here, therefore, the question especially of marriage, but also, in connection with this, of the relationship of children to the Church of God. This is incidentally, however. He is replying to questions which have been put to him by the Corinthians, and which are of the most practical character. We find a setting forth of things very different from that which we have, for instance, in Ephesians, by the same apostle, where the higher character of marriage is shown us and God's thought in its institution. Here we have nothing but the practical question answered;—as to the expediency of it, for instance, when sin has now come in so to dislocate that which is natural, and to pervert that which is best in nature; making the strongest ties oftentimes to be the most significant of evil.

1. Here the principle, which is that which we are mainly concerned with, is a very simple one; the application of it, also, as the apostle gives it, so simple as to need little more. The principle is that the institution of God is to be maintained. Sin has not altered the rightness of that which God at the beginning ordained for man. The institution of God, therefore, has to be maintained, but on the one hand we are to consider the disturbance which sin has brought in, and how that affects the conduct of a believer with regard to such things, and we have also to consider that grace has brought in with it a power which is above nature and created new interests beyond those of the individual. Christians are free, but the apostle's idea of freedom is liberty to serve. He has no thought of anything freer than the service of Christ. Thus if these higher interests are the motive, a man may walk above nature, walk of course in faith; and he must take heed that he *has* faith to walk in this way. If not, in the necessary testing which will come in, there will surely be a breakdown, and evil instead of good. The path must be that of faith, and it can only be, therefore, in the following the will of God that we can have faith for it. We can never have faith for paths of our own choice simply. Thus, if a man choose to walk free from all distraction to serve God, apart from all the natural ties which God has instituted, he may be proportionately free from the distraction of cares which would in measure take him off from the service that he covets. On the other hand, if he is not with God, he may place himself in circumstances where there shall be much more distraction. The apostle has no thought of asceticism in the smallest degree. Man may go outside the world, as he imagines, into a wilderness and solitude, only to find that there is an inner world from which he is not

manner also, the husband hath not authority over his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, unless it may be by consent for a time, that ye may devote yourselves to prayer, and be together again that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency. But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. But I wish that all men were even as myself; however every one [f]hath his own gift from God: one man after this manner, and another after that. Now I say unto the ummarried and to the widows, it is good for them that they remain even as I. But if they have not control over themselves, [g]let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

[f] Matt.19.12

[g] 1 Tim. 5. 14.

2 (10-16): Of separation and divorce.

2. But unto the married, I enjoin, not *I*, but the Lord, Let [h]not the wife be separated from her husband; but if also she have been separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband leave his wife. But as to the rest, say *I*, not the Lord: If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her.

[h] Mal. 2.14-16. Matt. 19. 6, 9.

separated and cannot separate himself, and which claims him the more for the very isolation which he has chosen. The separate path is not to be sought, therefore, for its own sake. It is not to be taken as if it were in itself a higher elevation. The motive is that which governs all, and here, therefore, the will of God, which can alone give one a right motive. In general, as the apostle decides here, the rule is the natural one. He cannot perhaps exactly quote any more that it is not good for man to be alone, and that God hath made him a help meet for him. This always remains, of course, in measure true if we contemplate man as man, but it is the first creation, not the new one; and, as already said, the interests of Christ and service to Him, in a scene which so calls for service as does the world in its fallen state, are motives which the original creation did not contemplate. The general rule, even for Christians, remains the natural one, and a path of special faith requires distinctly the special gift of God. If God brings one into circumstances of trial, He is competent for the circumstances. If we essay the trial apart from this, we shall only find the breakdown of a strength which is the strength of nature, and not spiritual strength.

On the other hand, for those who are married, the bond which God has ordained is, of course, recognized. There is no longer, in the same sense, freedom. The apostle could desire for all the very highest path, of course, but he has no commandment for any with regard to this. Wishing that all men were even as himself, he realizes, however, that every one has his own gift from God, one man after this manner and another after that. He is only expounding here what the Lord Himself more summarily declares in the nineteenth of Matthew. Thus far it is only the case of marriage among Christians themselves that he is speaking of.

2. He now takes up the question of separation and divorce; and here, as most naturally having to do with this, the case of a believer united to an unbeliever. In those days there must have been necessarily from such a cause oftentimes the greatest perplexity. He decides that in such a case the wife is not to separate herself of her own will from her husband, as in the case of Christians also he is wholly against separation; and if the wife has been separated she is to remain unmarried or to be reconciled to her husband, the husband not to leave his wife. In the case of an unbeliever there is, of course, a difference. On the side of the Christian, if the unbelieving wife be content to dwell with him, he is not to leave her; so, on the other hand, if it be the husband that is the unbeliever and

And the woman who hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband; for the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were the children unclean, but now are they holy. But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not bound in such cases, but God hath called us in peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt [t]save thy husband? or what knowest thou, O husband, if thou shalt save thy wife? [t] 1 Pet.3.1,2.

3 (17-24): Specialties of the calling.

3. Only as the Lord hath distributed to each, as God hath called each, so let him walk; and so ordain I in all the assemblies. Was any one called being circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any

not the wife. The reason of this he gives as to be found in the sanctification of the unbelieving husband in the wife, or of the unbelieving wife in the Christian to whom she is married, and he adduces as the proof of this the known position of the children of the married in such a case. The children, he says, are holy. This, of course, as it is the basis of his argument, must have been an acknowledged fact for Christians. The working of Israelitish law was quite in the other direction. If a man had married outside of Israel, the children were unclean, and were disowned as belonging to the congregation of the Lord. The holiness of the children here is not a necessarily spiritual condition, but that of external relationship, as we may say, but which of course manifests the mind of God for blessing to those who are in such a relationship.

The baptism of the household is not intimated, but it is evident that this would naturally result from the position here. The token of discipleship could hardly be denied to those who as holy were to be brought up as disciples. They are thus addressed throughout the epistles, and they could not be so addressed if outside the Kingdom of that in which the claims of Christ as Lord were owned. It has sometimes been argued that the unbelieving wife or husband is, according to this, as much holy as are the children; but this is an oversight as to what is really expressed. The unbelieving husband or wife is only sanctified in the believing partner, not otherwise: sanctified, therefore, in that relationship in which he or she stood to the other, and not in himself, so as to be himself acknowledged in any relationship to the Church of God. The relationship was clean and owned of God, so that the believer could continue in it, and is urged to do so. But, on the other hand, if, on the side of the unbeliever, he departed, then, in such cases, the brother or the sister, says the apostle, is not bound. He or she is not obliged to recognize any more the relationship as existing. Yet the apostle does not mean by this anything equivalent to divorce, or that which would set absolutely free the one separated from. The Lord Himself has decided in the plainest possible way in the Gospels that there is but one ground for divorce, and we have no right from the apostle's words here to suppose, as many do suppose now, that they declare another. Whatever trial there may be in such circumstances of separation, yet if there be no more, it is a trial to which God has called the person in question, and for which He must be counted upon; but to continue in the relationship as far as possible is that which he encourages. Christianity, with its all-embracing desire for the salvation of souls, would rather use such a relation for the salvation of the unbeliever than cast out one who might be thus rescued from his natural, lost condition.

3. The apostle here, in a parenthesis, goes aside to consider for a moment how far this principle of abiding in the position in which God's call found its objects would stand good. The general rule was, and he ordains it in all churches, to abide wherever one could abide with God. There was to be no restless spirit of

one been called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised. [j]Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bond-servant? [k]care not for it. On the other hand, if thou canst become free, use it rather. For the bond-servant, called in the Lord, is the Lord's free man. In like manner, also, one called as a free man is Christ's bond-servant. Ye [l]have been bought with a price: be not bond-servants of men. Brethren, let each, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

[j] Gal. 5. 6. Gal. 6. 15.

[k] Jno. 8. 36.

[l] ch. 6. 20.

4 (25–40): Of yielding to nature, or not yielding.

4. Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I think, then that this is good on account of the present necessity, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Art

change, as if circumstances were the great consideration rather than God's control of circumstances, which ought to be realized. Thus, if any one was called, being circumcised, he was not to become uncircumcised. He was not, as it were, to ape the Gentile. So, if one were called in uncircumcision, he was not to be circumcised. Circumcision and uncircumcision were alike now on the same footing; that is to say, there was nothing in them. The keeping of the commandments of God was the whole matter. If a man were called even being a bond-servant,—and we can hardly imagine, perhaps, the bitterness of such a position oftentimes in those old heathen days, and especially for a Christian in bond-service to a heathen,—yet the apostle bids such an one not to care about it. If he could become free, by all means he may do so; but on the other hand, if he were ever so much a bond-servant and called in the Lord, the Lord had set him free in such a way as no bondage on the part of man could possibly affect. He could serve Christ in that condition; and the more painful the circumstances might be, the more acceptable even, we may be sure, would be such a service. His spirit was free, nothing could touch that, and He who was his Master was Master also of all else, so that this, as all other things, should work for good to him. If he were free as to circumstances, he would still be Christ's bond-servant. Christians are those bought with a price. They were not to be indeed the bond-servants of men. They were not to allow themselves to descend to a lower sphere of service. Christ was to be served, and His people, of course, in Him, but always, therefore, in the remembrance of that love which had at the same time bound him to Christ and set him free. The general rule, therefore, is, let each abide in the calling wherein he is called, if only he can abide there with God. If, of course, his position is such that he cannot abide in it thus, he is bound to leave it; but the restless spirit of change is not that which suits Christianity. It makes too much of the world and the circumstances, which are indeed nothing, but only a condition under which God can display Himself without possibility of hindrance.

4. The apostle returns now to the matter in hand. He answers the question, then, how far, in view of actual circumstances, marriage were good or not. He tells them this is a mere question of giving advice. He has no commandment of the Lord. He distinguishes that in the most absolute way from whatever judgment he may give as one faithful, as he was known to be, through the mercy of the Lord to him, and whose spiritual judgment might therefore be of the greatest value to those who used it aright. There was that which the apostle speaks of as a "present necessity." It is to be supposed that he refers to the immense pressure of the world upon the infant Church. This would make the

thou bound unto a wife, seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife, seek not a wife. But if [m] thou shouldest also marry, thou hast not sinned; and if the virgin marry, she hath not sinned: yet such shall have [n] tribulation in the flesh; but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the [o] time is shortened. For the rest, let those who have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use the world as not disposing of it as their own: for [p] the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without care. He that is [q] unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he shall please his wife. There is a difference between the wife and the virgin. She that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord that she may be holy, both in body and spirit; but she that is married, is careful for the things of the world, how she shall please her husband. But I say

m Heb.13.4.
n ver. 26.
o 1 Pet. 4.7.
p 1 Jno.2.17.
q 1 Tim.5.5.

entanglement with unnecessary cares a thing not to be desired. Still he can do little more than reaffirm what he has already said. In view of it all, it was good for a man to remain as he was; but if he was already bound to a wife, he must not seek to be loosed. If he was loosed, then he would not have him seek a wife; but at the same time distinctly decides that there was no sin at all that was in question. He or she who married did not sin. There would be trouble naturally, as he foresees, but he is not going to make this too strong a point with them, for there might be that which more than compensated the trouble. In short, it was a matter for individual exercise and determination. No one could determine the course of another; but as to all, the time was shortened. The coming of the Lord was nigh, always nigh for the Christian; without regard to any exact knowledge, he was to be in the spirit of constant expectation. Those who had wives were to be as they who had none. If they wept, things were passing, so that it was not to be as it were in real sorrow. As to that in which they might rejoice (of course, he is speaking of circumstances, what might thus rejoice them here), still they were to be as those who rejoiced not. Whatever they acquired, they were to be as though they possessed it not, and while using the world, they were not to dispose of it as if it were their own. They had, so to speak, a certain interest in it, but the character of everything was necessarily determined by the condition of things. The world was passing away; and their possession of anything would pass away with it.

And there was another matter also to be considered; the great and important thing in his eyes was that people should live without care,—without that weight of anxiety which would disturb them in their walk with God. As a fact, he is not speaking of what should be or what need be, but what is so often found. The unmarried would be naturally careful for the things of the Lord, to please Him —he has no one else to please. If a man is married, he has, on the other hand, plainly, another to please, and thus he is tempted at least to care for the things of the world in order to please his wife. So with a woman, in the same way. The one who is free from everything of this sort can be careful for the things of the Lord alone. She that is married is apt to be careful for the things of the world, just with the desire, and a not unreasonable desire, to please her husband. He is not saying this, as he declares again, constantly guarding it, for anything but for their profit. He does not want to lay down rules, the observa-

this for your own profit; not that I may set a snare before you, but for that which is seemly, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any one think that he behaveth himself unseemly as to his virginity, if he be beyond the flower of his age and so it must be, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he who standeth firm in his heart, having no need, and hath authority over his will, and hath judged this in his heart, to keep his own virginity, he doeth well. So that he that marrieth doeth well; and he that doth not marry doeth better. A wife is bound for whatever time her husband liveth; but if the husband be fallen asleep, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the [r]Lord. But she is happier if she so remain, according to my judgment; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

[r] 2 Cor.6.14.

tion of which might only be a snare to them, but he wants them to seek, whatever their course may be, to serve the Lord without distraction. There was no sin, as he insists again, there was no kind of sin in marriage; but if a man had no need of it, if he had authority over himself and had judged in his heart to remain so, he did well. So, on the other hand, he says, the one who marries does well, although if he does not, he may do better. Once in the bond of marriage the Lord's will was already declared, wife or husband were bound unto death. If the husband were fallen asleep, the wife was still free to be married to whom she would; (thus the apostle declares positively as to the lawfulness of second marriages;) but he puts in the condition that it was to be only in the Lord, which does not mean simply that she was to be only married to a Christian, though that of course, but as seeking the Lord's guidance about it and therefore in obedience to Him, as the whole Christian life should be. The happier course, according to his judgment, was for her to remain unmarried. He thinks that he could surely speak as one having the Spirit of God, but there he leaves it.

It is plain how, all through, the apostle insists upon the difference between advice, such as one Christian may give another, (such as he above all others was competent to give,) and the command of God. All, of course, that is given here is given by inspiration, the advice as well as the command; and if, as we see in a chapter beyond this, the apostle *ordained* anything, it was in fact the commandment of the Lord. The advice was inspired, but it was *advice*. The character of it in that respect was not affected by the inspiration. It is not the lowering of the thought of inspiration, to look at it as advice simply, what he himself characterizes as that.

Subd. 3.

We have seen that in all this part of the epistle, it is the Church as in the world that is looked at, encompassed by influences which are adverse. The whole trinity of evil is against the Church. There are enemies without. There is, alas, an enemy within also, and this is that which needs specially to be guarded against. External enemies can never prevail against the Christian who is true to himself. The first failure, as we see in the church of Ephesus in the apocalyptic epistles, was in the maintenance of first love to Christ. That of necessity allows all other evils to come in. Christ, if He be known and walked with, is absolute sufficiency, as the apostle has shown us here, for everything that can arise. There must be, first of all, that which comes in between the soul and Him, in order to expose it to the power of evil.

We have seen the wisdom of the world as that which was in the case of the

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chaps. viii.–x.)

Encompassed by the prevalent idolatry, the manifestation of the enemy's work.

1 (viii.1–6): The knowledge of one only God.

1. NOW, concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any one think [s]he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any one love God, the same is [t]known of him. Concerning, therefore, the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For

[s] ch. 13. 12.

[t] Gal. 4. 9.

Corinthians the first element of seduction. This encouraged, as it always does, the flesh, which was manifesting itself amongst them in the grossest way.

The apostle now comes to that which was encompassing them on every side, the prevalent idolatry which was the fullest manifestation of the enemy's work, of the hold that he had got upon man. The very knowledge that Christians had with regard to it had itself its dangers, through the assumption so often accompanying knowledge, and needed to be corrected. In consequence of their apprehension of the nothingness of an idol, they might walk as little realizing the power which was actually working through it, and which had molded the whole form of things around them. In connection with this, therefore, the apostle looks at the spirit in which one must walk in order to be free from the enemy's power, and appeals to the testimony of history as to the dangers of a path which lay through such a world as this.

1. He begins, therefore, at once with that which had no doubt been made a question with him, things sacrificed to idols. They were everywhere. That which was sold in the shambles was very often what had been thus offered. What were they to do about it? Was there defilement in it? He begins by asserting, first of all, the absolute nothingness of idols according to the knowledge given to the Christian. The Hebrews had a word which expressed this. The idols were "elilim",—"nothings"; but then, knowledge itself was not a sufficient guide in relation to these things. Knowledge (that is, the idea of knowing, not the things known, but the idea of knowing) puffed a man up. How readily this takes place, we ought surely to realize. How easy it is to value one's self upon every bit of truth attained, so as to set one's self on an elevation above others, instead of seeking to serve with that knowledge! They needed love, therefore, as the apostle says. Love is that which edifieth. It does not think of its own things, but of the things of others; and it is this only which is safe for the Christian himself. If a man rested upon his knowledge as if he knew something, he knew nothing yet aright. How small, (although there are things surely known,) but how small, after all, is all the knowledge of time compared with that which a moment's entrance into eternity, as one may say, will effect for us! The man who values himself upon his knowledge is but, as it were, a child, priding itself upon that which others recognize to be merely childish. He does not make light of it, of course, as that which has to do with God. The knowledge of God aright gives God His place in the soul and delivers from self, if it be really knowledge. Pride cannot live in such an atmosphere; and if one loves God, the blessed thing is that he is known of God. He walks in the light of that which God knows, as one who is manifested to Him. With regard, therefore, to the eating of things sacrificed to idols, the first principle necessarily is that the idol is nothing in the world, for there is only one God. There are plenty that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, heavenly objects of worship or earthly ones, "gods many and lords many," according, alas, to the multiplicity of the evil principles which stir men's hearts; but to us there is but one God, the Father. This is how God is characterized for us now, the way

however there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, (as there are gods many and lords many,) yet to us there is [u]one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and [v]one Lord, Jesus Christ, [w]by whom are all things and we by him.

[u] Eph. 4. 6.
[v] Eph. 4. 5.
[w] Col. 1. 16.

2 (7-13): The conscience free or not free.

2. But knowledge is not in all; and some with conscience of the idol eat until now as of a thing sacrificed to idols; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But [x]meat commendeth us not to God; neither if we eat not, do we lack; nor if we eat have we an advantage. But take heed lest by any means this your [y]right become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one see thee who hast knowledge sitting at table in an idol-house, shall not his conscience, he being weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to the idol? and the weak one, the brother for whose sake Christ died, would perish through thy knowledge. Now when ye

[x] Rom. 14. 17.
[y] Rom. 14. 13, 20.

in which Christ has revealed Him. It is not a question here of the Trinity, or the distinction of persons, but of how God has been revealed to us in relationship, first of all to Christ, and thus to all who are His. God is no more what the mere monotheist might account Him. He is not One far off, but One come nigh. He is not One from whom, through the very dread natural to man, one might seek rather to escape, but One who is for us; One of whom it is a delight to know that all things belong, and that we also belong, to Him. How different a thing this from the mere question of one god or many. And so there is for us one Lord, he says, Jesus Christ. God hath made that same Jesus, whom men crucified, both Lord and Christ. He is, moreover, the One by whom are all things, the One who has acted for God the Father, both in creation and in the redemption of those ruined by the fall. We too are by Him. We are the fruits of His love, the work of His power. This, then, is the primary thought, and it is above all necessary that the soul should be free, not under superstitious dread of other objects, real even or unreal. There is nothing but what is under the control of Him who has loved us, who has given His Son for us, and of that Son Himself who is at the right hand of God upon the Father's throne, and living for us there.

2. But then, even among Christians this knowledge was not just as it should be in all. Some with conscience of the idol ate things sacrificed to idols. They were not free in spirit, and thus, although the idol itself was nothing, yet their *conscience* was defiled. It is a question which has already, in fact, come before us in Romans, but it is a question which pressed everywhere, in the condition of the world around Christians in those days. What was to be done? Should a man press his knowledge upon one who, after all, had not attained so much? It was rather a case for yielding in love to the weakness of another. The meat itself was nothing. It was no advantage eating it or abstaining from it, but the important thing, that which was needed, was that the Christian's right should not become a stumbling-block to the weak in faith. Suppose one who had not this knowledge were to see one who had it sitting at table in an idol house, might he not be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to an idol while, after all, his conscience was not good about it? He was merely imitating the faith of another, and the imitation of faith is not faith. He might thus be put into a condition in which he would be really drifting away from a right conscience toward God, and exposed, *naturally*, even to perish through another's knowledge. This may seem unnecessarily strong language. We might ask how is it possible that one of Christ's should perish? He is not really insisting upon any possibility of this sort, but he is insisting upon our responsibility, however this

thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye [z]sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble.

[z] Matt. 25. 40, 45.

3 (1x. 1-22): The transformation of privilege.

1 (1-7): The claim.

3. [1] Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus [Christ]* our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. My defence to them that examine me is this: Have we not a right to eat and drink? Have we not a right to lead about a wife that is a sister, as also the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, [a]and Cephas? Or I alone and Barnabas, have we not a [b]right not to be working? Who carrieth on warfare at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and doth not eat its fruit? Or who tendeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

[a] Matt.8.14.

[b] 2 Thess. 3. 9.

* Some omit.

may be. If we were to put poison upon a man's plate, whether he died or not, we should be responsible for his death; and if God will not suffer His own to find all the consequences of their sin and failure, if He will necessarily, as true to His own love, come in to deliver them, this is not knowledge such as we are to act upon. It does not affect our own responsibility, who may so easily, by our own acts, really lead astray the sheep of Christ and do them spiritual damage. It is important also to realize that in ourselves there is no help or hope, if once we are adrift from our anchorage, if we have got away from Christ. And how easily is it possible to get thus away! In this case it would be simply, as we might say, the aim to be as another Christian more advanced than myself. If the conscience be taken away from the simple, individual subjection to God, the result is the same, no matter in what way reached. We have to be exercised, each one for himself, and as a matter of responsibility to God alone, as to each step in the way. We are not to follow one another, except as we are convinced, as the apostle puts it, that that other follows Christ; but then again, if that which I do is something which may make my brother stumble, whatever may be his own responsibility in the matter, mine is clear. Says the apostle, "I will eat no flesh any more if it is to make my brother to stumble." This and this alone is the right use of knowledge.

3. But at this point we have once more what seems an entire digression from the apostle's subject, yet it is not really so. He is about to set before us this spirit which he has already exemplified, and as that which is necessary to be our spirit in order to be able to go through a world like this, under the power of Satan, and where there are in every direction baits and lures, to lure the one who is capable of another object than Christ Himself. This was the apostle's object; and he shows us now how everything,—whatever it might be, (the undoubted privileges which were his as an apostle or a minister of Christ,)—was nevertheless to be used in the interests of Christ Himself. If it were claimed apart from this, it would be, for the man himself who did this, an evil and not a good.

[1] He first gives us, therefore, the claim which was rightly his as an apostle. Was he not that? Had he not seen Jesus the Lord? It was from Him, as we know, that he had got this apostleship; but were *they* not the seals of it also? Had not his work approved itself and been owned of God? They certainly were not the people to question this. If he were not an apostle to any others, yet surely he was to them, for they themselves were the seals of his apostleship. If, therefore, people were questioning, with regard to him, whether he had really

2 (8–14): The scripture support of the claim.

2 Do I speak these things after the manner of a man, or doth not the law also say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written, [c]Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn. Is it for the oxen God is caring? or saith he it altogether on our account? Yea, for our sakes it was written, that he that ploweth might plow in hope, and he that treadeth out corn, in hope of partaking. If we have [d]sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, should not we rather? But we [e]have not used this right, and bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they [f]who work about sacred things eat of the things of the temple? They which wait upon the altar, partake with the altar. Even so, hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel, [g]live of the gospel.

c Deut. 25.4.

d Rom. 15. 27.

e 2 Cor. 11. 7, 9.

f Num.18.8, 21.

g Gal. 6. 6.

3 (15–22): The transformation.

3 But I have used none of these things; and I write

this apostolic right, he answered at once by fully claiming it. No doubt they might take advantage of what we have read with regard to his life at Corinth, his working with his own hands there, a distinct testimony in the midst of people such as were the Corinthians, of the love which sought not theirs, but them. Was it a question, then, of right on his part? Had he not the same right as other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas, to lead about with him a sister as a wife? Or had he alone and Barnabas not the right to abstain from working? What did common reason say? Who carried on a warfare at his own charges? Who planted a vineyard without expecting to eat of the fruit of it? Who that tended a flock did not eat of the milk of the flock. The claim then was evident, and nature itself affirmed it.

2 But not only nature, Scripture affirmed it also. This was not what he said himself simply. Did not the law, which was practically the Scripture that was in their hands (there was little as yet of the Christian Scriptures as we know)—but did not the law say these things too? He interprets it according to its typical character as at other times. In the law of Moses it was written: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Was it really, after all, for the oxen that God cared so much? He does not, of course, mean to deny that God has care for oxen, but was that the great thing? Was there no higher purpose of such a principle as that? Does he not, in fact, say it altogether, as the apostle puts it, on account of others,—the ministers of His grace? Yes, he says, for our sake it is written; that he that ploweth might plow in hope, and he that treadeth out corn in hope of partaking. Was it not right? If he had sown unto them spiritual things, did they think it a great matter that he should reap their carnal things? They acknowledged this right in others; could they fail to acknowledge it with regard to himself? And yet he had not used this right. That was the secret of his conduct at Corinth. He bore all things that no hindrance might be given to the gospel of Christ. Here was his motive. Here was the characteristic and principle of his life. It was Christ who governed one who was perfectly free in serving Him. But further, as to the law and in that which touched the present question more nearly, had not those who wrought about sacred things a right to eat of the things of the temple? Did not those who waited upon the altar partake with the altar of the gifts given? There is a perfect analogy in God's dealings at all times; and in this case the Lord has ordained, says the apostle, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

3 But we now come to see how this privilege is transformed in his hands into

not these things that it may be so done in my case: for it were good for me [h]rather to die than that any man should make my glorying void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward; but if not of mine own will, I am [i]entrusted with a stewardship. What, then, is my reward? That when I preach the gospel, I make the gospel* without charge, so as not to use, as belonging to me, my right in the gospel; for though I be free from all, I have made myself [j]bond-servant to all, that I might gain the more. And [k]to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under law, as under law, ([l]not being myself under law,) that I might gain those that are under law; to them that are without law as without law (not as without law to God, but in [m]lawful subjection† to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the [n]weak, I became as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am become all things to all men, that by all means I might save some.

[h] 2 Cor. 11. 10.
[i] Col. 1. 25.
[j] Rom. 1. 14. Gal. 5. 13.
[k] Acts 16. 3.
[l] Rom. 7. 4.
[m] Gal. 2. 19, 20.
[n] Rom. 15 1. 2 Cor. 11. 29.

* Many add, "of Christ." † ἔννομος, "inlawed."

another kind of privilege altogether; that is, the privilege of sacrificing himself for Christ and in His service. "I have used," he says, "none of these things"; an argument no doubt which they were pleading against him, and he was not going now to insist upon this claim. He did not want them to do anything with regard to this. There was a glorying which he had, and which he would rather die than have made void. It was not indeed as to preaching the gospel that he was speaking. It was not his having anything to glory in there. With regard to this, necessity was laid upon him, he could do nothing else; yea, woe would it be to him if he did *not* preach the gospel. Quite true that if he did it freely, of his own will, he would have a reward, but if not, still he was entrusted with a stewardship; but now then, what was the reward of which he speaks? It was this, that in preaching the gospel he could make the gospel without charge, so as not to use his own right in the gospel; and that, in order to make the gospel itself more effective. Free from all, even love made him a bond-servant to all, that he might gain the more. Thus, if he were addressing himself to Jews, he became a Jew to gain them. We have seen this principle already in the circumcision of Timothy in the Acts. To those under the law he became as if under the law, though he was not, as he carefully tells us, himself in reality under it; but he was privileged to give up his liberty, and he gave it up freely, to gain those that were under the law. He could be with them without insisting upon his own Christian freedom; just as, on the other hand, he could be with the Gentile as without law, not as being lawless with regard to God; on the contrary, just as in lawful subjection to Christ; for it was in His interests that he was acting and seeking to win souls. Thus he wrought that he might gain those without law. If men were weak, he took the same ground; he would become weak, too, that he might gain these. As to any privilege of his own, he could give it up. He could not, of course, give up that in which he was bound in duty to God. That was another thing. He had no liberty in that which belonged to another, but with regard to anything which was simply his own right, he could give that up and did give it up, that by all means he might save men.

4. We have seen the transformation of privilege in the hands of one for whom

4 (Ix. 23-x. 14): The testing in the way.
1 (23-27): Conformity to the conditions of the way.

4. [1] And I [o]do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker with it. Know ye not that they who run in a race-course, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So [p]run, that ye may obtain. And every one that contendeth [for the prize] is temperate in all things: they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an [q]incorruptible. I, therefore, so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body and lead it [r]captive, that having preached to others, I may not myself be [s]rejected.

o ch. 10. 33.
p Phil. 2.16. Phil. 3. 13, 14.
q 2 Tim.4.8. 1 Pet. 5. 4.
r Rom.8.13.
s 2 Cor.13. 6.

Christ was the object of life. Privilege it remained, but how changed in its character! That which was but a matter of self-interest before, becomes now an opportunity for self-sacrifice on behalf of Christ and His gospel. This was a privilege indeed, and this is the spirit which alone can carry a man safely through Satan's world undeceived and unallured (we may add, undismayed) by all that Satan may employ against him. In this there seems to be the reference to the main subject of this part, in which it is plainly the power of the enemy which is before us. He is himself one who by seeking his own, lost all that he had, and this is still the nature of his allurement. He cannot, therefore, touch the one who seeks not his own, but the things of Christ. We go on now to see how the principle tests us, the testing being necessarily involved through the fact of going through a world like this, which is Satan's world.

[1] There is a prize before the apostle, but it is beyond and therefore outside of present things. He was seeking to partake with the gospel, which he personifies here—that gospel with which he was identified in its triumphs and gains. In this he was using the energy which was requisite to press through the difficulties of the way. Life was for him a race, calling on the one hand for energy, and on the other for conformity to the conditions of a race. As the apostle says, not all the runners in a race receive the prize. There must be a running after such a manner as to obtain. Every one that contendeth for a prize is temperate in all things; and this is only to receive a corruptible crown, but the Christian's crown is incorruptible. The apostle, therefore, was so running, not in any uncertainty about the end, but as taking the due means to reach the end. He was fighting, not as one beating the air. It was no needless conflict. There was his own body to be buffeted and led captive, as he expresses it; and here after all is always the great hindrance. We have seen already how the Spirit of God is in the body in order to deliver us from the power of it, and to make the very place of the conflict that in which God manifests Himself. He does this, as he says, lest having preached to others, he himself should be rejected. The word is "disapproved," but it is the ordinary word which the apostle uses again in the last chapter of the second epistle, where it is translated "reprobates." He there plainly uses it for final, absolute rejection, and here it can be really no different from that. People have sought to guard what needs no guarding, the precious doctrine of God's perfect grace, and of the believer's safety in committing himself to that grace; but there are, nevertheless, conditions of the way; and this Scripture always recognizes. There is a way the end of which is eternal life. The way of evil and unholiness does not lead to life, but the reverse; and God's grace never alters this. It would not be that which breaks the power of sin, if it were mere laxity in this respect. The apostle expresses no fear for himself, but applies the principle to himself. He could not except himself from the application. If he did so, he would be permitting any other professing Christian to follow his example in it. It is simply the professor who is contemplated in all these conditional statements, but when we say the professor, we do not mean the mere professor, for few such would own the application, and if the Christian does not own it he is a loser by that fact. The Lord means that we should solemnly realize the connection of holiness and salvation, and we must not in any

2 (x.1-14): The witness of history.

2 For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were [t]under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same [u]spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a [v]spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ. Howbeit, with

[t] Ex. 14. 19-22.
[u] Ex. 16.15.
[v] Ex. 17. 6. Num.20.11.

wise separate the two. On the other hand, nothing but grace can work for holiness. Nothing but grace can give us the only proper motive for a holy life, which is Christ's glory and not our personal gain; although we do gain personally by it. So with the apostle here, therefore. He speaks of himself simply as a preacher to others, and he puts himself upon the same ground as any other preacher. One may preach to others and be one's self rejected. That is, alas, clear, and that is all he says. *He* was entering intelligently into the conditions of the race and running it, but he had no thought that God would not preserve him to the end and enable him to persevere through all hindrances, whatever they might be.

2 He then adduces the witness of history in which the things that happened to Israel were, as he says, things that happened to them for types. Full of admonition in themselves, full of significance for that generation in which they really happened, they nevertheless develop for us a higher meaning which God would have us read in them, the history of which is so written that it might develop for us. How important it is to realize this principle all through those histories of the Old Testament, and even of the New, in which there is much more than is upon the surface, and in which God shows us His control upon everything in connection with men, making the wrath of man to praise Him, restraining the remainder of it, and giving a meaning to things which those of whom it is the history were perfectly ignorant. Thus he tells us that all our fathers, Israel's fathers, were under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They were set apart to Moses as his disciples; which is what baptism represents for us with regard to Christ. They were set apart in the most solemn way by the cloud which covered them and protected them from their enemies, by the sea which divided to let them pass and overthrew their pursuers. In that cloud and sea they were delivered from all the condition in which they had been as slaves to the Egyptians, and were set truly free,—free to serve God their Saviour. How powerful should have been the impress of such events upon them, God Himself having become in this way their Saviour-God! We can find in all this history a deeper meaning, but there was a deep meaning in what they themselves experienced. Then in the wilderness the same love followed them. They ate of the spiritual food; they drank, he says, of spiritual drink, ("spiritual," one may say, perhaps, in its origin, and in the meaning which was more than merely to furnish sustenance for them,—*that* might have been done easily in another way,) but to keep them also in dependence upon God and make them realize the ministering hand of God and the tenderness of His care for them,—thus that their hearts might be brought fully to Him and made absolutely to confide in Him. This spiritual rock, as the apostle says, followed them; not, of course, that there was any *literal* following of a rock, as some have wildly imagined, or of even the streams from the first rock smitten. There was another rock smitten, as we know, afterwards, and the streams which first flowed from the rock were, therefore, not those that actually followed them all through the wilderness; but the same love followed them with a similar supply, so that it was one and the same thing all the way through; and the rock had a deeper meaning than any they could have realized in it. The rock for us is Christ. It is from this Rock, the riven Rock, that the streams of the Spirit flow to us; a Rock which requires no more to be smitten (Moses in that way spoiled the type, as we know) but only to be spoken to.

[w] most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things happened as types of us, that we should not [x] lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written: [y] the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

w Num. 14. 30, 32.
x Num. 11. 4, 34.
y Ex. 32. 6.

Thus has God provided for us. The types of baptism and the Lord's supper, which some would find here, are part of that ritualistic perversion of things which lowers everything it touches. There are no types of baptism at all. The passage in the first of Peter which may seem to come nearest to this is in fact very different. There the water of the deluge and the water of baptism are spoken of in fact as *alike* figures. They are both figures of spiritual things, and they are like figures; but the one figure is not a figure of the other figure. So with baptism and the Lord's supper now. They are both figures, and they are in their highest, deepest, fullest reality figures for us. The very adoption by the Lord of such simple things as water, as bread and wine, admonishes us to keep to the same simplicity. Water can do only what water can do; and bread and wine can minister to the body, but not as such to the soul. The spiritual significance in them is everything for us, and the memorial character of the Lord's supper, in which we have the remembrance of a dead Christ, is an absolute protest against the thought of there being ministered to us in it a Christ who does not *as such* exist. It is not a dead Christ now with whom we have to do, but a living Christ; but it is not a living Christ we have to do with in the ordinance of the supper, but a dead Christ. There can be no confusion of these two things without a confusion resulting in every way; and, as has been said before, there is nothing more degrading, there is nothing that has wrought worse confusion for the Church of Christ, than forgetfulness of simple principles such as these. Here we have "the Rock was Christ." Does anybody imagine that the rock was literally Christ? Of course not; but when the Lord says: "This is My body," He uses similar language exactly. The rock was Christ in its spiritual significance, nothing else, and the supper is Christ in sweet and holy memory; and that is much more than anything that ritualism could give us.

These things, then, were types in Israelitish history; yet after all, spite of all God's dealings with them, spite of all the love which had delivered and which was continually blessing them, with most of them God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness,—solemn word of admonition then for us in these things which happened, as he says, as types of us, warnings of the greatest significance. As we think of how, indeed, there were but two of that whole generation brought out of Egypt, as grown men at least, who survived to enter Canaan, it is a serious admonition as to what might come of the testing of Christian profession after this manner. Warning it is for us all. We have no right to say, Well, but we are true Christians, and therefore we need not trouble about these things. These are things which as principles are of the greatest importance for us to realize. There are evil things for which we may lust as they lusted. If God prevents the extreme result for us, that is His mercy, but the effect of our disregarding the warnings may be that our lives may be, alas, how greatly spoiled and disfigured and made quite other than He would have them, by our laxity! The people turned even from God Himself and became idolaters. As it is written: "The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." They turned from the very One who had manifestly led them out of Egypt and who went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire by night and by day. They turned from the One who had drawn them to Himself and made them His own peculiar people after this manner, and in the very presence of the fiery mount they said: "As for this Moses, we know not what has become of him. Up, make us gods that may go before us." They might dignify their idols with Jehovah's name. God would have none of it. He had already forbidden it and stamped

Neither let us [z]commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ,* as some of them [a]tempted, and perished by serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them [b]murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them as types, and were written for our admonition, upon whom the [c]ends of the ages are

z Num.25.1.
a Num.21.6.
b Num. 16. 41, 46.
c Heb. 9. 26.

* Many read, "the Lord."

it as following a false god, and so in fact it was. The god they celebrated with their heathen games and sports was not Jehovah. How important for us to realize that we also may have in measure another god than the true God, while the name remains for us the same, and another Christ, perhaps, than the true Christ, although we speak reverently of Him all the while! The lusts of the flesh broke out in what followed in Israel's case. If one departs from God, the necessary result will be that from the evil in us we shall not be able to depart. It will have full control, as with Israel. In one day there fell three and twenty thousand of them. The passage in Numbers says four and twenty thousand, and it does not seem a question of any difference of reading here; but it does not say that the four and twenty thousand fell in one day. The apostle may give the immediate result here, and the history go further.

There was another form of evil. They tempted the Lord in the wilderness. They tried His patience. How great that patience had been with them, to its full limit! They refused His gracious provision and scoffed against His care, and perished by serpents. This shows us distinctly to what the apostle refers. For us, the admonition is that we tempt not Christ. It does not seem exactly to follow that he means that they tempted Christ in the wilderness. Another reading, very well supported also, is here "the Lord," instead of "Christ," but there is no need to adopt it. Christ is for us the Lord, the one Lord, than whom there is no other, and Israel's sin can be committed, as is plain, by us in this very way. We can refuse the light food of which Israel had said: "What is it?" but which contained so much for them; food of the mighty, and which would have made them, had they truly understood it, the men of might they should have been. How great for us, alas, is the danger of turning, too, from that which alone can nourish our souls and seeking in some form or other the things upon which men feed around us! The Lord allowed the power of the enemy to manifest itself in the serpents by which they perished, and the same power of the enemy will still manifest itself upon us in turning to the world away from Christ. It is there that his power is found. He is the prince of this world. The world has been formed in its moral character by that fall to which he seduced men, and thus, if we will venture upon this ground, we shall find that he has not yet given up those as to whom he believes he has gained the perfect right of a master. They murmured in other ways. They murmured when the hand of God came upon them in judgment, in the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They murmured against Moses, when it was really by the judgment of God that these had fallen, so that again the hand of the destroyer was upon them and the former judgment was solemnly confirmed in the repetition of it. How easily, too, we may murmur against that which has been simply the necessary judgment of God because of the sins of His professing people, instead of humbling ourselves before Him on account of them!

"All these things," then, the apostle reminds us here, "happened to them as types." They are not merely things which may be applied in that way now, but that is the very meaning of the history for us as we read it. They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. It is not the ends of the "world," but the ends of the dispensations past,—those dispensations of trial which for us are closed by the death of Christ, in which

come. Wherefore, [d]let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as belongeth to man; and God is faithful who will [e]not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but [f]will, with the temptation, make the issue also, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

5 (x. 15-33): Association with God, and its responsibility.

1 (15-22): Identification with the Lord or with the demon.

5. [1] I speak as to men intelligent: judge what I say. The [g]cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The [h]bread which we

[d] Rom. 11. 20.
[e] 2 Pet. 2. 9.
[f] Jas. 5. 11.
[g] Matt. 26. 27, 28.
[h] Matt. 26. 26.

the utter condemnation of man is reached, but in which, also, divine grace has reached us. We can look back now over those ages and find them all ministering to us their special lessons. How wonderful a place to be set in, to have instruction of this kind from every past generation! How important that we should heed the admonition of it, and how guilty shall we be in disregarding it! "Wherefore," says the apostle, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." That, surely, is a great part of the admonition. Those dispensations were the trial of man as man. There can be no trial when there is no self-confidence on man's part,—when we have reached where the apostle was, and can say we have no confidence in the flesh. All self-confidence is confidence in the flesh. All true confidence is confidence in God alone. It is thus that we find ability to stand. We stand indeed, but we stand as He holds us up. If we think that we stand after any independent manner, we are on the very brink of a fall. Dependence is that which is proper to a creature; and we are not merely in a dangerous place, but we have, as one may say, already fallen, when we have lost our hold of the Hand that supports us.

How blessed to realize again that in the midst of a world full of testing, such as this is, in which the history of the Church has repeated for us in so solemn a way the history of Israel, in which man has been tested under grace (although that was not the object of grace) as he has been so thoroughly, still with the same result! When we look at ourselves, and think of how little we are able to stand against all the trials of the way, how blessed to realize the limits which the apostle sets to the trial! There is no temptation but such as belongs to man; and then, God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. He is speaking, of course, of a soul in the true condition of conscious helplessness before Him. If we are self-confident, we shall find that the least temptation is something above what we are able; but if we are in a right condition, (which should be the normal one of the Christian,) God will not suffer temptation to be too strong for us, but will with the temptation make the outcome of it also a deliverance in due time, that we may be able to bear it. He adds, significantly, as one great lesson of it all: "Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." Idolatry was but one feature of that history of Israel, although a notorious one; but for us, is it not, in fact, in a heart that wanders from God which makes in this way, however little conscious it may be, a false god of its own,—is it not in this that all departure from Him, we may say, is found? Here is the root, the basis of it. If God Himself, the God that we know, the God that has been revealed to us, is the God of our hearts, the God whom we serve and follow, how safe and how blessed will be our condition! Christ is the manifestation of God for this, and thus we are indeed far better provided than was Israel in the knowledge of this God who claims our obedience and our affections. What is it for us to depart from One who has revealed Himself to us after this manner?

5. We return now fully to that question which has been in the apostle's mind all the way through, the results for us of this power of Satan manifest in the world, of which he is prince, and where he has so molded things according to his mind. In fact, in those days, as we know, idolatry was everywhere. The Emperor was worshiped as divine, so that not to worship him was disobedience

break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because we being many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf. Behold Israel after the flesh. Are not [i]they who eat the sacrifices in communion with the altar? What then do I say? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that the idol is anything? But [I say] that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they [j]sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I would not that ye should be in communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Do we [k]provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

[i] ch. 9. 13.

[j] Deut. 32. 17.

[k] Deut. 32. 21.

2 (23-33): The conscience, and service to another.

[2] [l]All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all do not edify. Let [m]no one seek his own, but the other's [good]. Every-

[l] ch. 6. 12.

[m] ch. 13. 5.

to the law. What was a Christian to do in the midst of so great defilement? They, on their part, were identified with God, and with Him whom God has appointed to be the Lord of all, who claimed such obedience as none other ever even thought of claiming. The apostle, therefore, looks at this question of association with God and the responsibility resulting from it.

[1] In the first place, he puts before us our identification with the Lord as in the manifest tokens of it in the cup and the loaf, which stood for a pledged communion with Himself. He bids them enter intelligently into this question. What was the cup of blessing which they blessed? Was it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread they broke, was it not the communion of the body of Christ? Were they not all by it one loaf, the manifested body, one body, as all partaking of that one loaf? It is plain that what men call the sacrament stands for something in this connection. There is an outward pledge in it. There is something which, if not real, is the fullest hypocrisy. Here is before us in this table, in all the responsibility of it, communion with the body and blood of Christ,—Christ in all that He has done for us, all that He has endeared Himself to us by. What are we going to do with it? Thus identified, must not this follow us into our common, ordinary life, into every detail of our conduct here? He puts before them Israel after the flesh. Were not those who ate the sacrifices in communion with the altar? Were they not identified, if what they did meant anything, if it were anything more than the grossest formalism, with all that that Jewish altar stood for? It was not, therefore, a question as to whether there was any reality in the idol or not. He has already decided that there was not, but the idol stood for something in men's thoughts; and not merely that, but in this idolatry the power of Satan wrought so that the things the Gentiles sacrificed they did not sacrifice, in fact, to nothing, but to demons, and not to God. Thus there was the most serious question possible. People could not escape by saying that an idol was nothing in the world, and that there was no other God but One. They could not drink the cup of the Lord, which said this, and the cup of the idol, which said another thing. They could not partake of the Lord's table aright and of the table of demons. Was it not provoking the Lord to jealousy? Were they going to be stronger than He?

[2] Once more he takes up that which might be urged, that all these things were lawful things. A man might sit in an idol's temple and get no harm. He might eat of the idol's offerings and get no harm. With his higher knowledge, these things meant nothing for him; but that was not the whole question. On one side they might mean nothing; on another side they might mean very much. In the one view, all things indeed were lawful, but here are other things to be affected by them. Could they say that all things were expedient too? If one

thing sold in the shambles eat, making no inquiry for conscience' sake, for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Now if one of them that believe not inv'te you and ye are disposed to go, all that is set before you eat, making no inquiry for conscience' sake. But if any one say to you, This hath been sacrificed to an idol, eat not, for his sake that showed it and for conscience' sake; but conscience, I say, not thine own, but that of the other: for why is [n]my liberty being judged by another conscience? If I partake with thanksgiving, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, [o]do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the assembly of God. Even as [p]I also please all men in all things, [q]not seeking mine own profit, but that of the many, that they may be saved.

n Rom. 14. 13.

o Col. 3. 17.

p Rom.15.2. ch. 9.19,22.

q ver. 24.

had nobody to please but himself, then he might, of course, please himself; but all things, as he says, that are lawful do not edify, do not help another; and that is what we are bound to do, not to seek our own, but the good of others. As to the things sold in the shambles, which were in fact often things sacrificed to idols, they could eat of them if that were all, and make no inquiry for conscience' sake. They would neither be defiled spiritually nor injured in any way. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. They could eat it in that sense, and so far have no conscience about it; and, supposing one of those that believed not invited them to a feast, and they were disposed to go, they could eat of that which was set before them, making no question of anything, as far as they were concerned. But suppose some one said, This is sacrificed to an idol. Now, says the apostle, that shows that here is a man to whom an idol is something, not nothing, as it is to you; and now your conscience ought to be affected by that which affects his conscience. You are one as Christians, and you are bound to help one another as one. The conscience that I am regarding, you may say, is the conscience of another, and not my own; yes, but why do I turn my liberty into something which another man's conscience judges as evil? Why do I injure him with that which I may, so far as I am concerned, do sinlessly before God? If I partake of this meat with thanksgiving, why should I do it so as to allow myself to be evil spoken of for the very thing I am giving thanks for? Is it a right use? Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. We are to give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews or Greeks or the assembly of God. With eyes watching all around, how careful should the conduct of a Christian be, and how very far from deciding a thing is the mere question of right and wrong in itself; of right and wrong, that is, in the thing of which I am thinking, leaving out altogether the judgment of others or the snares that may be for others in it! Let it be even here not simply the question of Christians, but, as he says, Jews or Greeks, who may be drawn to Christ or repelled from Him by what they see in Christians. How common a case is this! How commonly is the conduct of Christians pleaded against the Christianity they profess! For himself it was, as we know, the apostle's constant aim to please all men in all things, but in this spirit, which involves a necessary limitation, that he was seeking, not his own profit, but that of the many, and their truest profit, also, that they might be saved.

Div. 2.

We have now reached the second division of the epistle, in which we are no longer dealing with outside questions, with the relations of the Church to the

DIVISION 2. (Chaps. xi.–xiv.)

The activities and fellowship of the assembly.

1 (xi. 1-16): The headship of Christ, and of the man.

1. [r]BE ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you that ye [s]remember me in all things, and that as I delivered them unto you, ye [t]keep the things delivered. Now I would have you know that Christ is the [u]head of every man, and the [v]head of the woman is the man, and the [w]head of Christ is God.

r ch. 4. 16. Eph. 5. 1. Phil. 3. 17.
s ch. 4. 17.
t ch. 7. 17.
u Rev. 3.14.
v Gen. 3. 16. 1 Tim.2.11, 12.
w Jno.14.28. ch.15.27,28.

world, as one may say, but with that which was proper to the Church itself as a company of those gathered to the Lord's name. We have before us the spiritual activities of the assembly and the fellowship found in it. The apostle has hitherto been contending for the keeping up the fence of separation. He is now turning to what is entirely different from this. It is the fellowship of the assembly, the common enjoyment of the common blessings which belong to it.

1. In the first place, however, it is very striking that we have not the assembly as such exactly before us. The apostle begins, rather, with that which has to do with man's place in creation, apart, plainly, from the effects of the fall, therefore. He must settle this point before he goes on,—a most important point,—to show that the Church, with all its higher privileges, was still to be submitted to God as the Creator, and according to that which He had instituted for man as such. In all this he finds, indeed, the types of spiritual things. Nature is this throughout. If we look at nature apart from the word of God, nothing in it will be properly intelligible to us. If we take Scripture as the key to it, we shall find everywhere that we are in contact with the same spiritual truths as we find in Scripture. But this is not simply a question of such a kind: it is the simple truth that we have, as those who are Christ's, been restored (and more than restored) to the place which the fall had forfeited for man. We are to be filling, therefore, that place which God gave man first. We are to be observers of the order which creation has established for us. We must not use the thought of grace, or even of our place in Christ, (which is above and beyond all this,) to make void our obligation to carry out that which God has in this way appointed.

The apostle urges them to be imitators of him as he was of Christ. He could praise them that they kept him in mind in those things that he delivered to them, that they were keeping the things delivered; but he wants them to know that Christ is the Head of every man, come to be a Man Himself; taking His place as such, He takes it in necessary supremacy. He is not simply the Head of the Church here. He is the Head of *man* as a Man. He is indeed the Creator, but He is also, as elsewhere declared, the "First-born of all creation." As that First-born, he is not what Adam was; and yet, in another sense, we may speak of Adam also coming from the hand of God as the first-born of men. In that way Adam was the head of every man naturally. Christ is the spiritual Head, the One in whom manhood reaches its highest dignity, in whom the whole human race, so far as redeemed, rises again to the full thought of God for man, and beyond that which Adam himself, unfallen, could declare to us.

But Christ, then, is the Head of every man. The head of the woman is the man. Here is what we were saying; something which in the minds of many now would be contradicted or set aside by the place in Christ which we have got, in which there is neither man nor woman. That is quite true, and remains always true, that there is in Christ neither male nor female. There is a common equality, and one of the most perfect and highest kind, which can never be touched, never set aside, but to be acknowledged in the fullest possible way. That does not, on the other hand, set aside the fact that in God's order for earth, and in the place which God has given to man and woman respectively on the earth, the head of the woman is the man. The higher fact is shown forth in the

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or [x]prophesying with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman be not covered, let her hair also be cut off; but if it be shameful to a woman to [y]have her hair cut off or to be shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to have his head covered, forasmuch as he is the [z]image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. For neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause

x Acts 21. 9.

y Num. 5. 18. Deut. 21. 12.

z Gen. 5. 1.

lower one. There are not two heads in creation, but one. Two heads would mean division. God's thought is unity. The man, as he says afterward, is not without the woman in the Lord. The man and the woman form the man in the full sense of humanity, and the woman is necessary thus to make the man what he is; but that alters nothing, but rather confirms what he contends for here according to God's thought, as we look back and see it in creation itself,—the head of the woman is the man. Let us go further, he says. The Head of Christ is God. Is that something derogatory to His true character? Is not *He* God? Is not He divine? Yet, after all, it can be said, "the Head of Christ is God." Christ has taken His place as man, and He is not ashamed of it, and He does not refuse the consequences of it. He has come to be in creation the example of most perfect obedience on the creature's part, as well as on God's part the example of the most perfect grace, the fullest revelation of God that can be found. Thus, then, we have these things established.

There are some practical consequences in the exhibition of this order of things upon the earth. If a man pray or prophesy having his head covered, he dishonors his head; in itself a very small thing surely,—in that which it signifies not small at all. Everything depends upon the truth which is in it, or the error. The head covered for him is, as we see directly, the place of subjection taken. The woman covering her head does not profess to be the head. The head is covered with her, if she takes her place praying or prophesying; that is, as we see clearly, where it is a question of the assembly,—not necessarily as *gathered*, however, where her place in connection with others, therefore, is in question. If she prays or prophesies, although this prophesying was by a higher power than that of nature,—by the Spirit of God, and thus asserting for her her full rights as one in Christ, equal rights with any other,—yet if she prayed or prophesied with her head uncovered, she dishonored her head. Everything that is out of its place before God, is dishonored. If we exalt ourselves, it is our own dishonor. It is one and the same thing, therefore, he says, as if she were shaven. Why not let the woman cut off the hair which nature has given her? Plainly she has it in a way that man has not. You say, perhaps, if she has the hair, let that be enough, it is what nature has given her, let her wear that. But the wearing of the hair is not of necessity at all the owning the truth which is in it. The covering of the head owns for her, on her part, the truth which is in that testimony of nature. She is giving heed to the testimony when she covers her head. Thus the man ought not to have his head covered, because he is, in a direct way, as one may say, the image and glory of God, His representative upon the earth. The woman is the glory of the man.

All this has reference, of course, to present display. It is not a question of what is final, what is heavenly, what is eternal. It is God's order as He has instituted it, and which we are bound to respect. There is meaning in it also, and we shall suffer if we refuse it; but the point here is, the order of creation. Thus, if we look back, the man is not of the woman. The man did not originally

ought the woman to have authority upon her head [a]on account of the angels. However, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman; but all things are of God. Judge in yourselves, is it seemly that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any one think to be contentious, [b]we have no such custom, nor the assemblies of God.

[a] ch. 4. 9.

[b] ch. 14. 36, 37.

come from the woman. On the other hand, the woman came from the man,—not the order of things now, as one may say; but that is what God showed us at the beginning. Nor was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. The man was created first, and it was not good for him that he should be alone. The woman was created in view of this need,—a woman for that very reason; why not another man? Just because, as another man, there would not be really the same help found. He needs that which, while a symbol of the dependence of the creature, rather than the independence given in a sense to man, would appeal to him by that very fact, and to his heart as one dependent on him. In every way, however, the woman (not the individual as such, but *as* woman) is for the man; and "for this cause," he says, "the woman ought to have authority upon her head,"—the sign of authority,—"on account of the angels." The angels are the witnesses of creation. They have seen from the beginning what God did. They are acquainted with His thoughts with regard to man, and we are a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. Thus, then, the woman is to heed these angelic spectators.

However, he adds: "Neither is the man without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman, but all things are of God." God has instituted these things. If we learn them aright, we shall admire the wisdom of them; but whether or not, we are to submit ourselves to His appointment. A lower place is not of necessity a really inferior place. Christ has come into the lowest place of all in order to serve us, yet it was the most wonderful, the most glorious place that He could have taken, and all God's glory has been manifested in it. Thus we must dismiss altogether the thought of what things are, as we may say, in themselves. A servant's place, how unsuited to the Lord of glory! but look again, how suited and wonderful that Servant's place! Nay, is not God over all the One who serves all? And is He not by that very fact the Better who blesses the lesser? Has not Christ taken the place of service? and in that human body which He has, has He not pledged Himself to it in some sense forever? Let us, then, own that which God has done, and find the good of it. It is in our filling the place that we shall find the recompense from God—not just according to the place we fill, but in the way we fill it. God has appointed for us everywhere,—as we find when we come to the thought of the body itself,—God has appointed everywhere diversity, and in some sense therefore the inferiority of many, the parts that are weak and the parts that are not in honor as the other parts are; yet how perfectly are all fitted together, and how perfectly is every part necessary to the blessing of the whole! How fully has God united us in this way! Creation is but the witness of that which we find in the Church of God itself, so that the apostle appeals directly here to the teaching of nature. If a man have but long hair, is it not a dishonor to him? Why? Nature has not provided for him that covering which it has provided for the woman. If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for her covering; and how truly we feel that the more a woman hides herself, the more beautiful she is,—that in this

2 (xi.17-34): Communion with Christ's death.

2. Now in giving you this charge, I do not praise you, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For, first, when ye come together in assembly, I hear that [c]divisions exist among you, and in part I give credit to it. For there [d]must also be sects among you, that they that are approved may be [e]made manifest among you. When, therefore, ye come together

[c] ch. 1.11,12.
[d] Matt.18.7.
[e] Lk. 2. 35. 1 Jno. 2. 19.

hiding one's self is the very glory of the creature after all, and that she is but a lesson to us, one of the many lessons that God has given us as creatures, in this way. The apostle ends the matter, however, abruptly, by saying if this does not suffice, it must suffice then to say that we have no other custom than this, nor have the assemblies of God. He could speak for these, as, of course, being the one whom God had appointed to be the layer of the foundations for the whole Church at large.

2. We now come to the consideration of the assembly itself, and, first, in what gathers it. The order here is very simple and beautiful. We have, first of all, Christ in the exhibition of His love for us in the sacrifice of His death as that which draws us together. This is what our eyes are first fixed upon. This is where communion is found with one another.

We next turn to look at those who are in this way gathered. They are members of Christ, the body of Christ Himself; and we learn what is implied in this, not only that which makes them one, but the diversity which exists in this unity as that which is implied in the body as an organism. Then we have, in the thirteenth chapter, the spirit which practically animates the body of Christ, the spirit of love, which is the spirit of ministry,—a ministry which the body in itself implies, for the members are members one of another, and exist not merely for themselves, but for the whole. We are then competent to look at the exercise of the gifts belonging to them in this character, as come together in actual assembly. This is in the fourteenth chapter, and we see how the spirit of love is that which in fact orders everything, produces that which is true spiritual order according to God. This closes this part of the epistle.

We have, then, now before us, in the first place, the centre of communion, Christ Himself, but Christ not looked at as a living Person, as many would expect. We do not start with the thought that Christ is in the midst, although He *is* in the midst where people are gathered together to His Name; but that is a different thing, and in fact we are not drawn to Him as personally thus present. We are gathered together to His *Name*. That implies His absence rather than His presence, but it is the expression of what we know of Him as the absent One. It is this apprehension of Him that gathers us, and we see at once that it is not a living Christ, but a dead Christ that is before us. That is the very point of it. We are brought to look back upon the hole of the pit from which we are digged, and to realize our indebtedness to this blessed One whom we remember. Important it is that we should realize this fact, that it is a dead Christ and not a living One we remember. It is, as already said, the destruction of ritualism, in this respect, to its very centre,—the body of Christ which people speak of as indeed receiving in the Lord's supper. What body do they think of—a living or a dead body? Do they really think that they receive the dead body of Christ in any real sense in the Lord's supper? The living body is out of the question. It is a dream which is not found in any text of Scripture whatever. A dead body no one thinks of, and yet if it be any participation that we have here, it is in the dead body and not in the living one.

The apostle begins here with a reference once more to their divisions. The first thing was that in coming together they came not for the better, but for the worse, to make apparent,—as coming near to God in fact does,—their true condition. When they came together, the first thing that was manifest was their divisions. In their very way of coming together they showed themselves apart.

into the same place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper: for in eating each one taketh his own supper before [others], and one is hungry and another 'drinketh to excess. Have ye not, then, houses for eating and drinking? or despise ye the assembly of God, and put them to shame who have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I do not praise. For [g]I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, [h]took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

[f] 2 Pet. 2.13. Jude 12.

[g] Gal. 1. 12.

[h] Lk. 22. 19.

Their sects declared themselves in making separate parties of that which they owned to be the one body of Christ, even going so far as, in eating, each to take before others his own supper. It was manifest that he made it his own and not the supper of the Church as a whole, and one was hungry and another was even drinking to excess.

The license about it all is manifest; and there was an opportunity for this which now no longer exists. In fact, the Lord's supper was instituted, as we know, in connection with the celebration of the passover, and the passover supper was that, therefore, that introduced it. The "agape," or love feast, which existed at any rate very early in the Church, was the continuation of this paschal supper, which, though it did not really belong to the supper of the Lord itself, yet was supposed to make it all more exactly according to the institution. Thus there was in connection with the supper the taking of a meal, which gave the opportunity that we see here the Corinthians availed themselves of for license. The preliminary feast was crowding out, in fact, the Lord's supper altogether, and they were going on as if in entire forgetfulness of it. That is evidently what the apostle is saying here. He reproves them by asking, have they not houses for eating and drinking in, or were they putting to shame the poor who had not, and despising the assembly of God which embraces them all? Could he praise them in this? It was impossible that he could do so. Then he calls them back to the institution of the supper as the Lord had given it. It is striking that he had received this of the Lord Himself. As the distinct minister of the Church, it was not simply that he found existing that which he went on with, as in the case of baptism. As to baptism, Christ had not sent him specially to baptize, although he did baptize as others did; but the Lord's supper has a different place altogether. As that in which the unity of the body of Christ was manifested, he must have a special revelation concerning it. Thus he speaks of the special way and circumstances, so touching as they were, in which the Lord had instituted this gathering feast; it was on the night on which He was delivered up, in which there was given opportunity for the treachery of one of His own, one of those specially gathered around Himself, and who had walked in company with Him, beholding the manifestation of divine love and power in Him, which had been given. It was upon such a night as this, and in the midst of the shadow which was thus coming upon His soul, that He had taken the bread, giving thanks, and broken it, and said: "This is my body, which is for you; ["broken" is not in the original] this do in remembrance of Me." Simplicity itself all this is; how completely opposite, again, to all that ritualism has connected with it! In like manner also, after supper He took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." The apostle adds, as his interpretation of it: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye declare the Lord's death until He come."

Here is the whole matter. No atmosphere of mystery surrounds it whatever. It is simply the memorial of a death to which we as Christians owe our all,

> In like manner, also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye declare the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall

—the death of the One whom it has made our Lord forever. In contrast with all this, think of what ritualism has made of it! It is striking, also, that the very point here, the thing for which he is reproving the Corinthians, is for not *discerning* the Lord's body. It is plain, therefore, that it was the very opportunity to show what this discernment of the Lord's body would be. He takes no trouble to define it. He does not in the least suppose that there is any mystery about it, in the sense in which men speak of it. That which he speaks of is bread and the cup. These are the memorials of the Lord in His death. The bread is His body, more strictly Himself, as one may say. The cup is His blood, the remembrance not so much of Himself as of His work. The body and the blood are separate. It is, again, a dead Christ that we remember. We surely remember, also, that He is risen from the dead, and we know by faith, even, that He is present with us; but all this, while it gives additional gladness to the celebration, in no wise forms part of the celebration itself. The Person of the Lord, as already said, appears more distinctly in the bread which we break. It is this One, the Man Christ Jesus, whom we remember. This implies no forgetfulness of what He was, of course; but it is in fact the One who was here in the world in that life and death of His which were for us, which give us all our knowledge of Him as He lives now before God. All our apprehension of Him belongs, we may say, to this manifestation of divine love and glory in Him who was upon earth among us. He is gone out of it, but He is the same Christ who was here, and He is coming again to receive us to Himself. We look back in the ordinance to His death. We look forward to His coming again.

The cup is here said to be the new covenant in His blood,—a hard text for ritualism, that! Is it literally the *cup* that is this? We may say that is a figure,—the cup is used for what is contained in it. Granted. Well, is what is contained in it, then, the new covenant in Christ's blood? It is the blood itself if anything,—that blood which we are quite sure He did not carry into heaven, but which was shed upon earth. It is the memorial of a life given up for us, and which, as given up, in its sacrificial character is the foundation of the new covenant of grace in which we stand. The words are simple enough, and easy to be understoood. It is only ritualism itself that makes them hard. The Lord adds again in this case: "Do this in remembrance of Me." That is its distinctive character, a remembrance. A remembrance is not of something existing at the present moment, but of something in the past. It is all our joy to know that this death that we celebrate is actually past, and that it can never take place again. To talk of an unbloody offering, as men do in their mass, is only to destroy the whole reality of what is expressed here. There is no such thing as an unbloody offering. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and this the Lord did once when He offered up Himself. Thus the significance is as plain as can be. It is absolute simplicity, which we may darken by reading into it what is not there, and which it has even been confessed by many as not there. They tell us we shall not find the doctrine in this chapter. Where should we look for it so well as here? here where the apostle is insisting upon our discernment of the Lord's body, and putting before us the very thing that gathers us? The previous chapter, to which we are sometimes referred as giving the real doctrine, has, as we have seen already, no such doctrine in it. The bread is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup is the communion of the blood of Christ. It is not the thing itself, but the expression of our fellowship in it, which is the very thing which the common remembrance implies. There is absolutely nothing else but this. We do not forget that we are one bread and one body, because we are all partakers of this one bread or loaf. It cannot be

> eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty in respect of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he

said that we are one loaf in any sense but as being identified with that of which we partake,—therefore, with all the thoughts that are implied in it. So if it be said we are one body, we have plainly, that which gives us unity merely as a body, brings us into one mind, one thought. It is not even said here, we are the body of Christ; and if it were, there would be an immense difference between the body of Christ which we are and that body of Christ which we celebrate in the supper. The body that we have before us is not the body the Church, and we could not possibly, in the nature of things, become the body the Church, by any reception of the body of Christ. They are different thoughts in different connections. Nor, as already said, is it really the body of Christ that is spoken of here at all, although it is quite true that the gathering *is* the gathering of the body of Christ; but that is not in the apostle's mind, as is evident.

He is thinking simply of the unity which, in fact, makes us one body in any proper sense, this unity of apprehension of that blessed death which Christ has died for us, and which our hearts own as having power over us in this very coming together; but there is really no difficulty here. In the wisdom of God, things are so expressed that we can scarcely make mischief of them if we would. The doctrine of the tenth chapter is in absolute conformity with the doctrine of the eleventh. There is no difference between them. In both alike it is the thing expressed with which we are identified, identified in the apprehension that we have of it and the part which God's grace has given us in the effect. We partake of the bread and the wine, and the bread and the wine would be nothing to us except we saw in them the body and the blood of the Lord. We partake in this way of the body and blood of the Lord, assuredly not in the gross, material sense, but in the joy of the apprehension of what these are to us. It is the same truth as the Lord has Himself given us in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, and which is, in the minds of so many, itself to be referred to the Lord's supper. The fact is that the Lord's supper and what the Lord states there as to the bread from heaven refer to the same thing. That is all. It has been the triumph of Satan to materialize all this in such a way as to make it the instrument of a designing priesthood to get glory to itself, and to lord it over the souls and consciences of men. In no way has this been done more cruelly than in the transformation of the Lord's supper into a mass, or something approaching this. We cannot but remember, also, that at the Reformation the martyrdoms of the Lord's saints had largely reference to their refusal of this unholy doctrine,—a doctrine which would make the Lord die innumerable times, make His original death to be proportionately of little effect, and put the whole into the hands of men to make merchandise out of, and to assume to themselves the glory which is due to God.

How thankful we may be for the simplicity that we find in all this scripture! The thing that bewilders many as they look at it is just this simplicity; but there is, none the less, in the celebration of the Lord's supper a solemnity which the apostle warns us of. They could not eat this bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a light manner without being guilty in respect to the body and blood of the Lord. Here it is distinctly the "*Lord*" who is spoken of, that we may realize the character of the slight here given. We cannot bring sin into the presence of that which we celebrate as having put it away from us. If we come to celebrate the Lord's death without self-judgment, we destroy the holy character of that which is the most impressive proof of the holiness of God that could be given. Where shall we find it manifested as in the sacrifice of the Son of God Himself for sin? And "he that sinneth," says the apostle, "hath not seen Him, neither known Him." It is impossible, as he puts it, that sin and the knowledge of the Lord in that way can go on together.

that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself when he discerneth not the body. On this account, many are weak and sickly among you, and a good many are fallen asleep. But if we did discern * ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are †chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

† *cf.* ch. 5. 5. Heb. 12.10. 11.

* Or, "judge;" but the word is, literally, "discern."

He would not frighten us away from the table of the Lord by any means. He does not say, "let a man judge himself and refrain from eating." He says: "Let a man examine (or judge) himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." It is true that "he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" if he discerneth not the body. That is the whole point, and must be so. It is evident that the Corinthians were making a mere common meal of that which was intended to be the constant reminder of a love which has nowhere else any equivalent. They were reaping the fruits of this laxity. There were those, he says, many, weak and sickly among them, and a good many had fallen asleep. Thus the judgment of the Lord was necessarily upon them; not because they were not His own; rather, in fact, because they were; for, as the apostle says, "When we are judged" in this way, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." He distinguishes, therefore, in the sharpest way, between this present judgment and the judgment to come. But it is evident that this present judgment is a most serious and awful thing. It is the infliction of a love which, because it is holy and because it is love, must inflict what, as we may say, it is pain to inflict. We force the Lord to judge us in this way when we do not judge ourselves. God must of necessity exhibit His holiness with regard to the sins of His people. Whatever the work of Christ has done for us, (we cannot realize too much what it has done,) nevertheless it was never intended, it can never be allowed to be used for unholy purposes. Thus, they must not come together for judgment, as they were doing. These were the main points of what he had to say to them. "The rest," he says, "will I set in order when I come."

3. We come now, as already said, having seen the centre of communion, (that which forms in that way the one body,) to the body itself, to those who are gathered to the name of the Lord after this manner. We come now to see that it is in fact the body of Christ, and how far we are really to press the implications of this. "Body" is a figure, of course. We know perfectly well that it is the expression of a relationship to the Lord Jesus of the closest and most intimate nature, and which doubtless could not be expressed so well in any other way; but we do not fail to realize that it is, after all, a figure. The body is the expression of the mind. It is the link between the indwelling spirit and the external world in which we are placed. The body of Christ is thus that in which the mind of Christ is expressed, and that by which the One who is absent from the world nevertheless retains, in a certain sense, His place, and manifests Himself in it. We are the representatives here of the Lord Jesus, not simply individually, for as individuals we are not properly competent, but as a whole. We are not the *epistles* of Christ, but, as the second epistle declares, the *epistle*.

This is one rendering of what this body of Christ implies, but then we realize that there is not simply a relation to the Lord which is involved, but a relation to one another. In this body, as in other bodies, each member has indeed its own individual significance, and we must give full place for this individuality.

3 (xii): The Body and its members.
1 (1-6): The unity in diversity.

3. [1] Now concerning spiritual [manifestations], brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that [j] when ye were Gentiles ye were led away to [k] dumb idols in whatever way ye might be led. Wherefore, I give you to understand that [l] no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, [m] Anathema Jesus; and no one can say, [n] Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are

j Eph. 2. 11, 12.
k Hab. 2.18, 19.
l *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 2, 3.
m *cf.* Rom. 9. 3.
n *cf.* Rom. 10. 9.

Except the members of the body had their individual place, there would be no body at all. If there were no diversity, there would be no unity in this sense. The unity or organism depends upon the diversity which is in it. It is the unity of aim and purpose among parts that differ from one another. That is what we find then here, and it is, in fact, the relationship to one another which is dwelt upon in this chapter, rather than the higher character of it as in relation to the Lord. For that we must go to Ephesians and to Colossians; and it is noticeable, by the way, that when we go to these epistles, we are outside all question of the supper of the Lord. We have nothing of the kind in them. We get beyond it, as one may say. We are on the heaven-side of it; whereas this remembrance is for the world below; but the body, as already said, is here, therefore, exhibited more in the relationship of its several members than in its relationship to the Head. Being the body of Christ is that which gives it all its real significance, of course.

[1] We have, first, then, by way of preface to it, the unity which is in the diversity. The apostle begins by speaking of spiritual manifestations. There were more manifestations of this kind than simply those among Christians. There were manifestations of evil spirits as in that idolatrous worship of the Gentiles in which the Corinthians had had their part in the old times of darkness. They knew that they had been led away to dumb idols in whatever way they had been led. Now, on the other hand, with the manifestations of the Spirit in the midst, they must learn to distinguish. They must be intelligent in order to profit by them—in fact, not to be deceived by the power of the enemy; for where God works there the enemy will work as far as possible, a work by imitation, as Jannes and Jambres, the apostle tells us, withstood Moses in Egypt. It is plain that in the very midst of the Christian assembly the power of Satan might manifest itself in this way, and Christians be deceived, except they were in the power of the Spirit Himself who was manifesting Himself in the assembly. Thus the apostle gives them to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God could say, "anathema Jesus;" and no one could say, "Lord Jesus," except by the Holy Spirit. It is plain he does not mean by this that even an unbeliever among Christians could not say Lord Jesus, and that he is not speaking of anything which would inferentially and consequentially affect His Lordship. He is giving us simply that which distinguishes an evil spirit from the Spirit of God. The evil spirits, the demons upon earth, as we read in the Gospels, could freely own that Christ was the Holy One of God, but we never hear them say "Lord Jesus." That would be taking the place of subjection to Him, which, except when finally they are forced to do so, they will never take. All this removes, perhaps, what the apostle says here from what we find in the present day. We are, at least, little accustomed to think of an actual evil spirit manifesting itself in the midst of Christians after this manner. It is as plain that to those whom the apostle was addressing there was nothing at all strange about this, and it may be a question for us whether we have not rather lost sight of the doctrine than have lost the thing itself.

There is, of course, and we should all know it, that which is of real account in the tone of what is uttered professedly by Christian teachers. We are right in looking sharply to see whether the spirit of their teaching owns the Lordship of Jesus or whether there is that which is really derogatory and a dishonor to Him. This in the highest manner is what Satan works, and he is no doubt

[o] diversities of gifts of grace, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations, and the [p] same Lord; and there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all.

2 (7–13): The diversity in unity.

[2] Now [q] to every one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. For to one by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of [r] knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to a different one faith by the same Spirit; and to another [s] gifts of

o Rom. 12. 6.
p ch. 8. 6.
q Eph. 4. 7.
r ch. 1. 5.
s ver. 28.

manifest in all that is fundamentally false in doctrine. The apostle, however, has here before him something more defined and more imposing. We have lost so much the thought of what speaking by the Spirit in the assembly is,—*men* are so much before us, (the instrument rather than the One who works by the instrument,) that naturally we are not tempted in the same way so easily to receive what may be uttered. We may, alas, receive it too easily from other points of view; but we are not, at least, imposed upon by any pretensions to spiritual utterances. We should rather discredit these. With those who were accustomed to the manifestations of the Spirit in the midst, in palpable miracles and gifts that have passed from among us, there was necessarily a temptation simply to accredit that which was uttered to its full extent, and thus Satan might get his opportunity. With us he has, no question, equal opportunity, but perhaps not manifesting himself after the same manner.

Diversities of gifts, then, are, in the apostle's thought, spiritual manifestations. They are the voice of the one Spirit in the members of Christ. There are gifts of God's grace which are different as adapting themselves to different needs, and which are different, no doubt, because also it is safer to have these various ministries than a ministry all of the same kind, a ministry too copious and too full on the part of any. In the way in which God acts, it is plain that Christians are more bound together by their very needs, and that the instruments are designed to be kept more in humility by the sense of their imperfection,—of the necessary way in which one must supplement another. This is the manner in which, as we have seen many times, God has linked men together in creation. We are more debtors to our needs, to our very imperfections in this sense, (we are not speaking of moral imperfections,) we are more debtors to our deficiencies, than we have any idea of. God binds the whole body together, as the apostle says directly, in giving the more abundant honor to that part which lacks. But these are different gifts of grace, then. Withal there is the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations and the same Lord. In the ministrations of these gifts themselves, it is the Lord to whom the gifted ones are subject. The Spirit is the power by which the gifts are made known, but the Lord it is to whom the servants are always subject. Then there are diversities of workings, (this is more general), and the same God who worketh all things in all. Here is, then, the substantial unity amid all the diversity.

[2] Now we come to consider more distinctly the diversity in the unity. To every one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. That is the thought of it. It is in a practical interest and in the interest of all that the Spirit manifests Himself. Thus the responsibility of every one who has gift at all is that by this he is made debtor to others for whose profit the gift is given. He is not his own in this sense. He belongs to those with whom God has given him his place.

But there are, then, these different manifestations. In one it is the word of wisdom. That is that which would put knowledge in its proper place and give it its proper application. To another might be given the word of knowledge, still by the same Spirit, but which nevertheless exhibited itself within the limits of the individual. For instance, the word of knowledge would be the doctrine in itself, rather than in its practical application. To a different one, again, might

healing by the same Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another [t]discerning of spirits; and to a different one kinds of tongues; and to another the [u]interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, [v]dividing to each one as he pleaseth. For [w]even as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For [x]by one Spirit also we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and have all been given to [y]drink of one Spirit.

[t] 1 Jno. 4. 1.
[u] ch. 14. 27, 28.
[v] Heb. 2. 4.
[w] Rom. 12. 4-6.
[x] Acts 1. 5. Acts 2. 4. Acts 10. 44.
[y] Jno. 7. 37, 39.

3 (14-31): The specialties of the organism.

[3] For the body also is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And

be given faith by the same Spirit; not the ordinary faith of Christians, of course, but a special character and boldness of it which would lead the possessor into paths in which others not so gifted would break down. Then there were gifts of healing by the same Spirit; in others, the working of miracles; in others, prophecy; in others, the discerning of spirits,—not the discerning of what was working in men's minds, but rather of spiritual beings themselves in their work amongst men. Then, again, there were tongues and the interpretation of tongues. He puts lowest what the Corinthians were evidently tending to put in the highest place. We shall find in a little while how he distinguishes between tongues and prophesying, for instance, and his comparative estimate of each; but in all these things there was the work of the one and the same Spirit, who gave as He pleased to every one.

It was not to be considered, therefore, a failure in any one of the different instruments that he did not suffice for every character of ministry. On the contrary, it was the very opposite which was implied in the idea of a body. "The body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body." That we understand in the natural way, and just so it is as to the body in this case; "so also," he says, "is Christ." That is, for the moment, he looks at the body and Head in connection with one another, the "one new man" of which the apostle speaks in Ephesians. He does not touch this really, but merely uses language which is in accordance with it. The Church is Christ mystically in that way. "For by one Spirit," he adds, "we have been all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit." Here the propensity for materializing has been strongly manifested by interpreters, who, of course, have found the sacraments in words like these. They have perverted water baptism into a baptism into the body of Christ, a thing which is in the Lord's hands entirely, as surely as the gift of the Spirit is that which forms the body. On the other hand, the baptism of the Spirit is here plainly something different from that mere influence of the Spirit which people think about when they talk of being again and again baptized of Him. The body cannot be formed again and again. It has been formed, in fact, once for all, although it is constantly receiving accessions, of course; but the baptism of the Spirit is merely in analogy with the baptism of water, while absolutely and entirely independent of it. Again, the drinking of one Spirit, while it does not refer to the formation of the body, is clearly as disconnected with any sacramental ministrations. The reference is to that stream from the rock in the wilderness of which the apostle has already spoken. We have the reality of that.

[3] We come now to consider more distinctly the body of Christ as thus that which unites together the many members. It is plain that the body is not one

if the ear shall say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where the smelling? But now hath [z]God set the members each one of them in the body [a]according as it hath pleased him. But if all were one member, where were the body? But now the [b]members are many and the body one. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, the members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those parts of the

[z] ver. 28.
[a] ver. 11. *cf.* ch. 3. 5.
[b] ver. 12.

member, but many. The foot has a different function from the hand, but how foolish it would be for the foot to say, because it was not the hand, it was not of the body! It is plain that Christians are capable, nevertheless, of some similar foolishness. They have not the gifts of other people, and therefore they suppose they have none. They look at the manifestation of the Spirit in others, and they are only hindered and restrained instead of encouraged by it. As to what is implied in it, they practically make themselves to be not of the body; but, asks the apostle, if the doctrine already maintained be indeed the truth, is that any proper consequence at all? "If the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" On the contrary, it is just because there are these diversities of gifts that the body as a whole exists. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" God has indeed acted according to His own good pleasure as to it all, and we must therefore bow to His will about it; but it is plain that if all were one member, the body would be gone. As a consequence of the members being many and the body one, the eye cannot be in independence of the hand, the head cannot be in independence of the feet. It is not Christ that is spoken of here as the head: that does not seem to be the connection. These are not, either, the words which one would expect in reference to the Head of the body, the Church; but the apostle is simply referring to a body as such—of course in relation to what is here before him, but still giving only, as it were, a natural illustration. All the way through it is nature, as it were, he uses to teach us; so the members of the body which seem to be the feebler are still necessary; whatever they may be in themselves, each has some part to perform, which, if it failed, the body would suffer by it; and the very parts of the body, he says, "which we think to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." This is but the natural compensation which we find everywhere. The comely parts have no need. "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked." The application of this may be very wide, and that may hinder, in some measure, the proper realization of it; but it is the public place evidently, which seems to exalt one member of the body above another, which people constantly tend to think of as that which gives importance; whereas it is plain that the public place is what belongs rather to the few than to the many, and that God has ordained for the many rather, a service that is more hidden from public view. Yet how much do we owe as Christians to those who are never known, perhaps, in public! How much do we owe to those of whom, perhaps, we never think as of any account at all! On the other hand, what honor may we find that God has bestowed upon those very persons when the day of manifestation comes! How much may they have wrought that has never been realized by us, that we were too unspiritual to realize! How much honor does God put, even, upon the simple acceptance of a quiet place, a place that brings no dignity with it, but in which one can serve God just for the sake of that sweet service!

body which we think to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need. But God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked; that there might be no division in the body, but that the members might have the same care one for another. And if one [c]member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now [d]ye are the body of Christ, and [e]members severally. And [f]God hath set some in the assembly: first, [g]apostles; secondly, [h]prophets; thirdly, [i]teachers; then [j]miracles; then [k]gifts of healings, [l]helps, [m]governments, [divers] [n]kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all [workers of] miracles? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire [o]earnestly the greater gifts, and yet show I unto you [p]a still more excellent way.

c 2 Cor. 1. 6
d Eph. 1.23. Col. 1. 24.
e *cf.* Rom. 12. 5.
f ver. 18.
g Eph. 4.11.
h Eph. 2.20. Eph. 3. 5.
i Acts 13. 1.
j ver. 10.
k ver. 9.
l *cf.* Acts 20. 35.
m *cf* Rom. 12. 8. 1 Tim.5.17.
n ver. 10.
o ch.14.1,39.
p *cf.* ch.14.4. 5.

Thus may we realize, after all, that God may have given more abundant honor to the very part which lacked; and it is easy to understand that in this way He would unite us all together, making us profoundly conscious of our need of one another, and that there might be no division in the body,—such as these Corinthians were exhibiting, such as Christendom, alas, exhibits so much at the present day, but that the members might have the same care one for another. Sure it is that, "if one member suffer all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honored," it is really the honor and should be the joy of all. Thus he says here: "Ye are the body of Christ, and severally members." And God has been pleased to set some in the assembly in an order of His own,—first, apostles, who have laid the foundations; secondly, prophets, who have, with apostles as layers of the foundations, necessarily passed away, but whose work remains with us. Then teachers, doctrine being that which now and in all times lays the foundation still, the foundation for all practice and for all blessing. Then in this enumeration come miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. He does not give these as if they were the whole, after all. This is only a specimen, evidently, of how God has wrought; but it is plain that all were not prophets, all were not even teachers; all, too, were not workers of miracles. We can see that this was not simply a question of faith, as we speak, and that it is not to be argued that, if we had faith enough for it, then we might expect miracles to be restored. Even in the apostle's days all had not miracles. This is what the apostle recognizes as what is normal, not abnormal. All had not gifts of healing, nor spoke with tongues, nor interpreted. After all, the eyes of men were too apt to be upon that which was prominent, forgetting that which was spiritual and moral, and that which had greater value before God. The apostle, therefore, turns now to speak of this which is indeed the spirit of all ministry, the thing which underlies all these gifts if there is to be anything in them, and which exalts in God's sight many an unknown worker, many a man ungifted,—as men might think,—into a blessed place such as may be far above the greatest of gifts. As the apostle says, greater than all gifts was that of which he was going to speak.

4. We have had thus before us the assembly and what is implied in the fact that it is the body of Christ. The analogy of the human body is preserved all through. The parts are organs. Each member in its place has its distinct capacity and therefore its function and its work, and the whole implies ministry and self-edification, which is to be the result of all this. "The body edifieth itself

4 (xiii.) The practical test.

1 (1-3). The pre-eminence of love.

2 (4-7): Its tokens.

4. [1] If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have [the gift of] prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I could [q]remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and if I deliver my body that I may be burned, and have not love, I profit nothing.

[2] Love suffereth long, is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth [r]not behave

q Matt. 17. 20. Matt.21.21.

r Col. 3. 14.

in love." We come now to this love, which is the practical test of all that is truly edification according to God. Love is the spirit of service, as is plain. It is that which prompts not simply to work, but to serve in working. It seeketh not its own, but the things of others; and thus it is that upon which the apostle sets a higher value than upon any gift. It is the divine nature in its manifestation in men.

[1] Now he first of all insists upon the unique value of love. If this one element be removed, we have really nothing. It is not exactly the whole spirit of a Christian, but it is that which is above all necessary to his being that. No tongues thus, he says, have any value apart from this, whether they be the tongues of men or even of angels. It is merely like sounding brass or a cymbal clanging. It is dead, not living. Even the gift of prophecy becomes, apart from this, what it might be in a Balaam,—something that God may put to use, but which has no value to the one who exercises it. So with all knowledge, however universal it might be; so with all faith, if it manifested itself in such work as removing mountains; still without love it was all nothing. If there were that which simulated love still more, the bestowing of all one's goods to feed the poor; if there were that burning zeal in which one could deliver up his body to the flame, and yet love did not really prompt in all this, it would still be nothing. Nothing could possibly be more complete as to the full value of love and its necessity in everything.

[2] We have now the character of love itself; for we cannot be trusted to know what it is, as it were, instinctively, or by the signs of it even, which obtain amongst men. How often, in fact, do we mistake for it what may be social feeling, even the enjoyment which springs from a certain satisfaction of self in the object! How often do we fail to distinguish such things as these from the love that seeketh not her own! The apostle John, the apostle of love, in the same way has to give signs by which we shall know whether it is in fact divine, that is to say, true love according to God at all. Quite true that if a man say he loves God and loveth not his brother that will not avail, but on the other hand: "Hereby we know we love the children of God, because we love God and keep His commandments." The divine element must enter into it and characterize it everywhere, or it is not love as God would have it. The characteristics, therefore, are given here more particularly than elsewhere.

First of all, "Love suffereth long." It is in fact a sufferer in a world like this necessarily, as we see in Christ. What a field is this sorrow-stricken scene for its display, but how many calls upon it are there, therefore! Love suffereth long and still is kind. It does not wear out. It is not disappointed, not at least with such a disappointment as would check its outflow. Again, it envieth not. Plainly, it has not self before it, and therefore does not seek a place above others. It does not, therefore, envy others the possession of that which its possessor has not. For the same reason, "love vaunteth not itself." It does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think. It does not parade its deeds or its quality. It is not self-assertive. Still less does it go beyond what is due. It is not puffed up.

Its acts, therefore, are of a kind suitable to this. "It doth not behave itself

itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not quickly provoked, imputeth no evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 (8-13): Its realization in heaven.

8 Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; or tongues they shall cease; or knowledge it shall be done away. For we

unseemly." Love is the bond of perfectness, and puts every detail, even of common behavior, right. The world imitates it, as far as may be, because it sees its comeliness. It will give the highest manners to one who may be otherwise the lowest clown. Wherever it is, it reigns. It is the governing spirit. It brings other things into subjection to itself; but then, again, it seeketh not its own. This is its grand characteristic, although expressed in the negative, as so much of this is; for, as with regard to heaven itself, we learn it so much by its contradiction to what we find around,—what we find, alas, so much in ourselves too. Love "seeketh not its own." Its activities must of necessity go forth to others. It is not, therefore, quickly provoked. It is not sensitive of that which touches oneself, yet assuredly, it may be provoked into anger. It was love in Christ when He looked around upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. It was the desire of His heart for them which made their condition so serious in His eyes; but this anger is not nursed into malice. It subsides under the check of pity, the realization of what evil of necessity produces in the soul. This evil it does not impute; it does not reckon it to be there when there is not positive evidence. It has no pleasure in finding it. What it finds there is no question about imputing, in the sense in which this is said. If it be found, then, as far as may be, love covereth sin. It does not bring it out except there be positive requirement of divine righteousness or holiness that it should be brought out. It does not, therefore, rejoice in unrighteousness. How much, alas, of that which seems to be but the display of righteousness (as in Satan's accusation even of the saints) is a mere joy in unrighteousness, the very opposite, therefore, of righteousness itself! On the contrary, love "rejoiceth with the truth." Truth is the basis of all holiness, nay, of all good. There can be nothing apart from it. Love is not, therefore, blind. It has not the character which we may impute, perhaps, to human love. On the contrary, nothing is quicker or more penetrating in its view of things; but then, again, it "beareth all things." That is, as we saw at the beginning, it can patiently endure, it can suffer long. It "believeth all things" too; that is, it gives ready and unsuspicious credence. It does not suspect. As a consequence of all this, it "hopeth all things." It looks upon the good side rather than upon the evil, and, above all, God, in whom love is, who is always present to it, therefore always a cause of hope. After all, good reigns and not evil. Everything is in the hands of perfect goodness, little as at times this may appear outwardly, but thus there is no pessimism in love; it is optimistic in the highest way; but its ground of confidence is not in man, but in God. Hope, then, gives it energy or endurance. It "endureth all things." If we have not hope, there will soon be no strength to endure. Let discouragement be utter and complete, there is the end of all activity, there is the end of all service. There will be no power to serve where there is no hope in service.

8 We now look at it in another way, not in the character which it displays, but in its permanence as compared with all other things. Prophecies will be done away. Whatever their value for the time being, there will come a time when they will be indeed no more, and when their actual fulfilment will bring them to an end, whatever the honor which may be put upon them. Tongues, too, shall cease. They have reference to the condition of man, to what sin has caused, and do not put away the effects of sin, although they manifest divine

> [s]know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see by a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abide faith, hope, love; these three; but the greatest of these is love.

[s] ch. 8. 2.

power and divine love meeting man in these conditions; but they shall cease necessarily, therefore. Knowledge too shall be done away; that is, the kind of knowledge, of course, that we have now. He goes on to describe it afterwards as such a knowledge of things as we have by seeing them in a mirror when we cannot be in close contact with them so as to examine them for ourselves. We have to argue, to infer about them. It is largely not so much that things are, but that they must be so. This kind of knowing,—not the truth itself, concerning which the knowledge is, not knowledge in the high, full sense therefore, but the knowing, this kind of spelling out and putting together and learning, as he says, in part,—all this will necessarily come to an end when that which is merely in part is done away. It will vanish as the light of the taper in the sun. The light will be at the full when the means of light are, nevertheless, largely changed.

The apostle illustrates the present as the childhood state, therefore. A child necessarily speaks as one, thinks as one, reasons as one,—in fact, it has to do plenty of reasoning, and no one would make light of its imperfect condition; but it is imperfect, as we know. "When I became a man I put away childish things, for now we see by a mirror, in an enigma." That is the force of the words. We see the reflection of things, in a sense, rather than the reality. We are conscious of them by the impression they make upon the senses, and we have to argue from these impressions as to the facts. This is, in fact, a child's main business, which being done for those who are men, the process does not in the same way appear, although it still goes on. It is what is involved for us now, no doubt, in our being living souls, rather than spirits. We have often noticed that the living soul is what gives character to man's actual condition, as the book of Genesis may teach us, while the spirit is nevertheless in man, but embarrassed by the conditions of its existence. The body is the instrument of the soul, as the soul, too, is the instrument of the spirit. External nature is thus that which teaches us so much, and the very language which we use as to the deepest realities is borrowed altogether from external things. The spiritual we know not except as encased in the natural. This involves the enigma of which the apostle speaks.

As soon as a man is out of the body he is not conceived of any longer as a living soul, but as a spirit. The soul-life now is, no doubt, a needed discipline for the spirit; and in view of all that God foresaw as to man's condition and the outcome of his trial upon earth; the spiritual body,—as we shall see in what the apostle says beyond,—alters this relation between spirit and soul by putting the spirit completely in the governing place and making all conditions work in perfect subjection to it. That is the meaning of a spiritual body,—not a body which is formed of spirit, but a body which is characterized by the spirit that dwells in it. Such, it is plain, the body of Christ should be, for the Church has already entered by faith into the sphere of the invisible and eternal, while for it also there is, however, the necessary discipline from the state of things in the world in which it is. The apostle here, of course, is speaking of the individual: "Now we know in part, then shall we know even as also we are known." How wonderful a thing that! It is divine knowledge, as far as it goes, though, of course,

5 (xiv.): Conditions of divine co-operation.
1 (1-13): The pre-eminence of prophecy.

5. [1] Follow after love, and be emulous of spiritual [gifts], but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh with a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no one heareth; but in spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men [to] edification and exhortation and comfort. He

having all the creature characteristics; it is not the omniscience of God, and never will be.

Thus, then, the apostle concludes from it all: "Faith, hope and love abide." He is not speaking here of eternity, but rather in contrast with such gifts as, in fact, will come to an end, having served their purpose. Love abides, for it is the divine nature. Faith, as the evidence of things unseen, necessarily passes away when all is seen with the perfect knowledge of which the apostle has spoken. Hope, too, implies the imperfection which counts upon God, but sees not. It too, therefore, must pass away in full fruition; but love abides. Therefore, the greatest of these three things which morally characterize the Christian, is love.

5. We now come to the conditions upon which alone the divine can co-operate with the human, as in the exercise of the gifts in the body of Christ. That is the main point which the apostle insists upon here. We see, indeed, the gifts in exercise, and in the assembly, but we are not to suppose that we have a full account of this. It is rather that we have urged upon us that which will put every gift in its right place, and are made to have a right comparative estimate of them,—a thing of the highest use of necessity in the assembly, in the practical service which the gifts render to the body as a whole.

[1] We are to follow after love, therefore, while emulous of spiritual things. How has this been lost sight of in the condition of things which has so long obtained in the professing Church! Who thinks of seeking spiritual gifts? If God has given them, they may be (with certain restrictions, alas,) sanctioned in their exercise; but who thinks of seeking from God gifts which he has not got? If we seek them to glorify ourselves with them, then of necessity we shall seek in vain; and thus the two things are put together,—the following after love and the desire for spiritual gifts. We see how love rules, moreover, in the broad distinctions that the apostle makes now between two representative things, prophesying on the one hand and tongues on the other. Of course, this does not embrace all that is the exercise of spiritual gift in the assembly, by any means; but all the more are we distinctly shown the principle which is to govern all in the assembly,—what in fact the rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order," involves. What is decently and orderly in God's sight? The speaking with a tongue and the interpretation of the tongue are given at the end of the twelfth chapter—last; and not without a meaning, last, in the enumeration there. In its miraculous character, the tongue was, on the other hand, a thing most notable, and which,—as we see at Pentecost,—struck men everywhere with amazement. It acted as an alarm-peal for their consciences, or as an invitation to nascent faith. But whatever its value,—and it is plain that the apostle does not mean to deny its value,—yet it is one of the things which has vanished away. As a fact, people can hardly understand at the present time what a "tongue" meant, and many are the disputes about it. The thing is gone, however men may urge that it is through the failure of faith that it is gone, which they can not show from Scripture; but it is gone, and there are things in relation to it which are even difficult, perhaps, for us to understand in the absence of it. It is for us an appeal to the past rather than the present. We must not conclude from this that we are to refer all this teaching of the chapter pretty much to a past condition, as is almost taken to be a matter of course by so many. On the contrary, the apostle is putting that which could not pass in contrast with the thing that has passed. Tongues, whatever their value, might pass.

> that speaketh with a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied. For greater is he that prophesieth than he who speaketh with tongues; except he interpret, that the assembly may receive edifying. And now, brethren,

Prophesying, which he puts in contrast with it, could not pass, and this follows from the account which he gives of each. "He that speaketh with a tongue speaketh not," he says, "unto men, but unto God, for no one heareth," that is, with the understanding, although in spirit he may speak mysteries. Thus it is evident that this speaking with a tongue,—although it be, as we see clearly by what follows, the speaking of a real language, as the hearers at Pentecost heard each in his own tongue that which was being uttered,—implied speaking in a language which was not understood, at least by the mass of the hearers. It is upon this that the apostle insists as governing the use of it. A man could get no good by that which he did not understand. If there could be no understanding, if there were no one to interpret, then the tongue was out of place entirely. However much a man might have it, he was not to exercise it. In that character he spoke, as speaking in this unintelligible way, not to men who could not understand him, but to God only, who of course did. In spirit, too, he might speak mysteries. On the other hand, he that prophesied spake directly to men, and that for edification, and exhortation, and comfort. This does not, of course, define what prophesying *is*, but what it *does*. The effect of it is such that it could not possibly be lacking in the Church at any time. The Lord never ceases to care for the edification of His people, and thus we see, also, that prophesying here by no means has necessarily the character of predicting, though in those days there might be prediction, for the time of revelation was not passed. Revelation is now complete. If any man pretends to have what is fresh in this way, it is a false pretension,—the man is a false prophet and nothing else; but it could not be supposed that the people of God came together just to hear predictions of the future.

Prophesying means, rather, in itself the speaking in a direct manner from God and for God, and is in this way something which of necessity shows the spirit of Christianity, the heavenly places being opened to us, God capable of approach in that way, and which, if we know our privileges rightly, we shall easily understand. The man who is earnest to realize the place with God which this supposes, will be he who, in the power of that communion, will be possessed most of the mind of God. But this, therefore, will not be for himself alone. That which he has he has for others also. How important just to have this,—God's word for the time, which does not of necessity imply any great gift in the speaker of it! It might be, as the apostle puts it hypothetically here, but five words. It might be but the recital of the apt scripture upon the subject, or which deals with the state of soul of the assembly. It is something which implies spirituality rather than gift, and a spirituality which should be found, therefore, in every Christian. Thus it is that he says directly that they might all prophesy one by one. He did not certainly mean by this that they might all teach one by one, that such a gift lay within the power of any one to exercise. That would only make the actual distribution of gifts ineffectual, make all gifts conditionally one and the same gift, or every person possessor of every gift; which is plainly not so, and was never intended to be so. The diversity of gift, as has already been said, is the very thing which necessitates this ministry of every one to all the rest, and thus it abides in itself, a distinction which is to be maintained and insisted upon.

On the other hand, the thing that they were all to covet was that they might prophesy. How simple and how much needed the exhortation when it implies simply that all are bound to be with God so as to learn each for himself from

> if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either in revelation or in knowledge or in prophecy or in doctrine? Even lifeless things giving sound, whether it be pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or what is harped? For if also the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the war? So also ye with the tongue, except ye give a distinct word, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall be speaking into

God, in a sense as if there were not another! But this does not lead to the disregard of others. Rather, it makes one capable of the truest service. It might, as we see in the Acts,—where, of course, we have it in the full character of those times,—be found in a woman as well as in a man. Spirituality knows no sex, and the presence and mind of God is not denied to any one that seeks it, be it man or woman. The restriction with regard to the use of it in the assembly is another matter, and is based upon that which we have seen already, that is, that the public place is not the place which God has designed for the woman; but it has nothing to do with the reality of blessing such as this, which, if we do not realize and appreciate aright, we shall forfeit immensely. In fact, the whole Church *has* forfeited, how much, by the misapprehension of such scriptures as these! It has had, therefore, to relegate them in their application to the past or to maintain that prophesying as it is represented nowadays is preaching! The result of this will be very evident. On the other hand, the exhortation as to prophesying is the voice of God calling His people to enjoy their place of privilege with Himself, to learn in His presence, to have His mind, and thus to be fitted each one for the place given to him in connection with all others. How important, then, that we should realize this!

"He that speaketh with a tongue," the apostle goes on, "edifieth himself." He has not, as people strangely imagine, the thought that he might not himself understand the tongue that he was using. He *edifieth* himself, and we are told shortly after that the assembly cannot receive edifying except it be by the interpretation of the tongue. If there is not meaning in the tongue, it is like a mere lifeless thing, giving sound. This principle applies plainly to the possessor of the tongue, as it does to others. The apostle has no idea, as some have put it, that the mere consciousness, as it were, of speaking by a divine impulse (however ignorant one may be of what is contained in it) is that which edifies. The whole assembly might be edified on the same principle, if that were edification; but the apostle insists that there must be the intelligent apprehension of what is heard, or there is no use, no edification. Thus, he that speaketh with a tongue, but with no power to interpret (for the gift of interpretation might not necessarily accompany the gift of the tongue) edifieth himself simply, but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. He does not in the least desire to set aside the speaking with tongues. He would that they all spake with them, but much rather would he that they prophesied, because "greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues." It is evident that the Corinthians thought very differently as to that. The tongue, in their minds, put a man upon a much greater eminence than any prophesying could do, but how different where love rules! and that is the whole matter here. The edification of others is that which decides upon the greatness of the speaker. The one who speaks to most edification, whatever the manner of speech, is the one who is greatest. If, then, one came speaking with tongues, what would the profit be unless there was revelation or knowledge or prophesying, (which we see he makes, therefore, distinct from revelation: there might be a prophesying without that,) or doctrine,—the teaching of some truth?

He appeals to the lifeless thing even giving sound. If there were no distinc-

the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance. If, therefore, I know not the force of the sound, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian for me. So also ye, since ye are emulous of spiritual gifts,* seek that ye may abound to the edifying of the assembly. Wherefore, let him that speaketh with a tongue, pray that he may interpret.

2 (14-25): The need of intelligibility.

2 For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the understanding. I will praise with the spirit and I will praise with the understanding. Since otherwise, if thou bless in the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say amen to thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou, indeed, givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all;

* Literally, "spirits."

tions in the sounds, if it were all unmeaning, how would anything be gathered from what was piped or harped? If the trumpet gave an uncertain sound, who would prepare himself to the war? So, also, ye with a tongue, he says, except ye give a distinct word, that is, a word appreciable,—a word that shall be known in its significance by those addressed, how shall it be known what is spoken? You are just speaking, he says, into the air. Not a voice that God has given in the world but has its significance! If, therefore, tongues are to be merely a sound, the one who speaks will be simply a Barbarian to others, as those who listen are for him Barbarians. The rule, therefore, was for those who were emulous of spiritual gifts, that they might abound indeed, but for the edifying of the Church. So if a man were speaking with a tongue, he might pray that he might interpret. It may seem a strange thing that the gift of interpretation did not necessarily accompany the gift of the tongue itself; but in this way one can at least see that a gift of this showy character would be kept in more complete dependence, as was needed so much at Corinth; for the abuses which the apostle would remedy were necessarily found more or less among the people to whom he was speaking. Thus the one who seemed in their eyes so exalted by the gift of the tongue, nevertheless had to be indebted to the service of another for the interpretation of it. No doubt, where it was love that dictated, where love was in earnest for the help of men, God might add the gift of interpretation to the tongue itself, but the two things, as is plain, were distinct.

2 The apostle goes on: "For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful." It has been thought, perhaps generally, that here his inability to understand what he was saying was necessarily supposed, but why? Is not the fruit which the apostle is teaching us everywhere to look for, the edification of the assembly? And thus if a man prayed simply with a tongue, apart from interpretation, there could be no fruitfulness; in that respect the mind was really unfruitful. "But," says the apostle, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the understanding. I will praise with the spirit and I will praise with the understanding." That is, surely, therefore, in connection with the context here, in such a way that there shall be understanding all round, for he goes on directly to argue that if you bless in the spirit only, the one who occupies the place of the unlearned cannot possibly say "amen" to the giving of thanks; for he does not know what is being said. You may give

but in the assembly, I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, be not children in [your] minds, but in malice be ye babes, but in your minds be mature. It is written in the law, 'With other tongues and lips of others I will speak unto this people, and not even so will they hear me, saith [the] Lord. So that tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to those who believe not; but prophecy is not for those that believe not, but for those who believe. If then the whole assembly come together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in unlearned persons or unbelievers, "will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one who is an unbeliever or unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, the hidden things of his heart are made manifest; and so, falling upon his face, he will worship God, "declaring that God is truly among you.

t Isa. 28. 11, 12.

u Acts 2. 13.

v Isa. 45. 14.

thanks ever so well, but there is no edification for the other. Thus even in prayer and praise the same principle obtains. In the assembly all is done for the assembly. The speaker must be either the voice of the assembly to God or the voice of God to the assembly, but the assembly as such is always in mind, and the gathering is not to be diverted into any mere field for the private exercises of the saints, whatever their character might be. Solemn it is to realize that even the giving thanks well in this way would not justify the thanksgiving. The fact that the gift is from God does not of necessity justify the use of it. The use at any particular time must be governed by the principle which runs through all this, the principle of edification, which is sought always. The apostle was not speaking to discredit tongues, the ability to use which he had more than all, yet he deliberately chooses rather to speak five words with his understanding, to instruct others, (there he defines really what he means by five words with the understanding, which is that he may instruct others by them,) he would rather speak five words this way than ten thousand in a tongue. To think otherwise would be to be children in their minds; but he does not want them to be children in mind, although he would be happy that they were children in malice; but in their minds they were to be full grown. What, in fact, had God shown with regard to this use of tongues, unintelligible tongues, as we see? That is really the point of it. It was written in the law, in the book of Isaiah (the whole of the Old Testament is characterized as law): "With other tongues and lips of others I will speak unto this people, and not even so will they hear me, saith the Lord." But to what did this refer? In fact, to their captivity among foreigners or the dominion of foreigners over them, a thing in itself which would necessarily and notably speak to a people who could only be in this condition through their own sin and failure, and yet their sin would not be remedied by it, nor would they listen, as the Lord says, to these tongues by which He was speaking so strangely to them; so that in this case tongues were for a sign not to believers, but to unbelievers. God was speaking to them indeed, but in a strange language through their unbelief, and this only, through the hardness of their heart, shut them up the more in that unbelief, did not deliver them. Prophesying, on the other hand, was directly for believers, not for unbelievers. Now if the whole assembly come together in one place and all speak with tongues, he urges, and there come in unlearned persons or unbelievers, what will they say? What effect will it have upon them? "Will they not say that ye are mad?" It is supposed, of course, that there is no making plain the thing so as to edify; just used

3 (26-33): The spirit of love manifest in edification.

[3] What is it, then, brethren? when ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation:—let all things be done to edifying. If any one speak in a tongue, let it be by two or at the most three, and in turn, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others [w]judge.* But if

w 1 Thess. 5. 21.

* Or, "discern."

as strange tongues because of the wonder of such speech. They are tongues, he supposes, that are not understood. On the other hand, if all prophesied, and there came in one who was an unbeliever or unlearned, this bringing in of the mind of God, unbaring as it does the secrets of the heart, would bring conviction to the man who came. He might not indeed be converted by it, but he would find, in fact, his inmost heart searched out, and would recognize that it was God who was searching; so, falling upon his face, he would worship God, and declare that God was with them of a truth. How plainly is the character of prophesying thus seen as the bringing in of God in such a way as would speak for itself, the voice of God made audible in the speaker, with its direct power over the conscience of those who heard.

The apostle now gives general instructions as to the assembly itself, instructions which have singular inapplicability to the Christian meeting as understood most largely in the present day. It is a gathering of the assembly as such, with room for every one to find his place and to contribute his share to the general edification and under the guidance and rule of the Spirit of God alone. "When ye come together," says the apostle, as if it were the normal thing when coming together, "every one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation." He neither commends nor condemns this in any wholesale way. The Corinthians, no doubt, were ready enough, and their meetings would not lack in variety. The apostle's simple rule is that all things are to be done to edifying. That is the one practical direction, so simple that it is easily understood by any Christian. Any one is competent to say what ministers to himself and helps him.

It is important to see that while the Spirit is the power and energy always for this, yet at the same time he does not in any wise direct them to analyze their own convictions as to it. They are not to be before themselves in any wise. The object is to edify others, and the assembly, if right at all, will always be able to bear witness if it is edified. This governs also in what follows, that if any one speak in a tongue there are to be not more, at any rate, than two or three speakers, each in his turn, (does not that seem as if there were disorder enough in the Corinthian assembly?) and with one to interpret in each case. If there were no interpreter, then it is enjoined that there shall be silence kept in the assembly. Let such an one speak, if he be full, to himself and to God, but there can be no edification except a man can understand the language in which he is addressed. Even as to the prophets the same rule obtains, that there are to be but two or three speakers. There is not to be enough to distract or to weary, but to edify, and the rest are to judge. They are not to receive—because the ideal is a ministry of the Spirit—all that comes with the assumption of this. They are to judge. Scripture is in their hands as the means of judgment, and thus they are to discern, by that which the Spirit has already communicated, the character of present communications. If anything is revealed to another who sitteth by, the first speaker is to be silent—not, as is supposed by some, to give way to the new revelation. The apostle's words directly afterwards surely contradict that. All might prophesy, one by one. There would be time for each one, and no interference on the part of one with the liberty of another.

anything be revealed to another who sitteth by, let the first be silent. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For [God] is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

4 (34-40): The rule in a (fallen) creation.

4 Let the women keep silence in the assemblies: for it is not permitted to them to speak, but to be in subjection, [x]as also saith the law. But if they will learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the assembly.

x cf. Num. 30. 3-13.

There is no question here of the reality of the prophesying, as there can be no question of the reality of a tongue; but the reality of the gift does not hinder the regulation of the gift, or show, therefore, that the exercise of it is always according to God. The rule is still and ever the edification of the assembly. The contributions of all are thrown, as it were, into a common fund, that all may be enriched by them, and in this general enrichment no one need strive for his own things and no one is given room to take exception to that which perhaps may not minister specifically to his own need, and yet may be meeting, in the abundant grace of God, the need of others. All have need to learn and all to be exhorted, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. There is in each case the responsible man whom his gift is not to control, but who, by the Spirit, is to control the gift. Human responsibility is everywhere prominent, and the practical result is that which manifests the character of what is given. God is never a God of confusion, but of peace, and this is His manner of working in all the assemblies of the saints.

4 There was to be one exception as to this general liberty. In the assemblies, when the saints were all actually come together, the women were to keep silence. It is a question, not of a woman's capability of exhorting others or of edifying, but just that question of order with which the apostle started, and which creation establishes. The woman's sphere of liberty, and, one may say, sovereignty, is at home; that is to say, it is private and not public. It must not be thought that this does not give ample scope for the exercise of gift of whatever kind. If there were only more of the cultivation on the woman's part of that which belongs really to her sphere, how fruitful would be the exercise of gift with which God has endowed her and how many places would be open to her which men, by reason of their being men, could not in the same way fill! Thus in relation to children, it is at once evident; with the younger children, the woman is still the best and the nature-ordained teacher. God has placed the babe in its mother's arms and not its father's; and this does not mean that the woman's sphere is only in her own family. There are countless families to which her sex will introduce her, and where she may find herself fully at home and abundant profit and recompense of her work. So, through the wives, women have access in this way to an indefinite sphere of occupation for varied blessing. The wife is the heart-centre of the household, and the ability thus to reach the wife in a way that woman certainly can do far beyond others is an immense privilege and responsibility entrusted to her. Would that there were more realization of this! It would not be thought that the apostle's rule here, which is evident, was intended to reduce the woman to a nonentity or to deprive her of the use of whatever gift God may have endowed her with. As already said, if you take men themselves, how many have their proper sphere in any *public* ministrations? Women are no more disqualified in this sense than the large number of men are. God has ordained to each his place, and the spirit of love is only needed to find the wisdom which will enable any one to realize the doors which God will ever open to those who seek to serve Him among men.

Among the sick, again, how evidently is there a special place accorded to the

> [y]Came the word of God out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord; but if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant. So, brethren, be emulous to prophesy, and hinder not the speaking with tongues. Let all things be done fittingly and in order.

y ch. 11. 16.

woman! Here, the gentleness, the patience natural to her, the tender ministration of love, assert themselves with a power which God's grace uses continually for blessing to souls. Just when the strength is prostrated and the ear only perhaps left open, the heart is in the readiest condition to receive the truth. How blessed the privilege to be able here to sow the seed of life in souls plowed up and rendered receptive by God's dealings with them!

Thus, while the apostle's words are prohibitive in one way, they only open to us in another what is the true sphere in which the woman may be and ever has been blessed. But he allows no dispute about it. "Came the word of God," he says, "out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." How important is this here, where, most of all in the present day, as is evident, men tend to ignore or to resist what he here gives us! Indeed, as we easily may see, the whole chapter is largely set aside as pertaining to extraordinary gifts which have ceased, and which find their substitute as a whole, perhaps, in a preacher, who is supposed to have the remnant of all that exists in his own person, and to whom the congregation is for the most part confined. Thus a narrowness, in fact, attains which was never found in the Jewish synagogue, as one may easily see by the occurrences in the Acts. There was a ready invitation and scope for various speakers, even amid the iron rule and stiffness of rabbinism. Things are working at the present time, no doubt, to a larger liberty; alas, they are at the same time tending in an equal degree to laxity and to the disregard on another side of the apostle's word here. He is short and decisive. "If any one be ignorant," he says, "let him be ignorant." If what I have said already is not enough for his enlightenment, let him go without such enlightenment. On the other hand, there is need of exhortation surely to-day after his manner here: "So, brethren, be emulous to prophesy." Alas, it is hardly known what such words mean; and yet the responsibility remains as great as ever, and the thing to which we are all responsible to minister. He concludes with the simple words, so simple and so practical: "Let all things be done fittingly and in order."

Div. 3.

We are come now to the third division of the epistle, which is easily manifested as such by its topic, resurrection. The connection with what has gone before is evident and beautiful. Resurrection is, of course, the basis of the Church. Christ risen is the rock upon which He has been building His assembly. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of the truth for us at all times and which he insists on here as that; but the resurrection also of His people is that which he insists upon in connection with it, and which has beautiful significance in the place which it has here in reference to the other truth of the epistle. The Church is not looked at in Corinthians so much in its heavenly character as we find it in Ephesians, for instance, and even in Colossians. As the body of Christ it is, of course, heavenly, but what we are occupied with is its place in the world and its practical workings, always as remembering the needs which the being in the world ever supposes. Thus, how suited now, that we should be lifted at the close into another plane and made to realize the sphere to which the Church belongs by the contemplation of this doctrine of resurrection,—of that

DIVISION 3. (Chap. xv.)

Resurrection the perfecting of the individual and the Church.

1 (xv.1-11): A sufficient foundation.

1 NOW I make known to you, brethren, [z]the gospel which I preach to you, [a]which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, [b]except ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, in the first place, that which I also received, that

[z] Gal. 1. 11.
[a] Gal. 1. 9.
[b] Gal. 3. 4.

which will at last bring her, not out of her place as the body of Christ, but, on the contrary, into the place which is hers from the beginning, and which, therefore, is to be enjoyed in eternity! This third division is, therefore, as already said, that which lifts everything to a higher plane and connects the doctrine of the Church in the present epistle with the doctrine of the Church as we find it elsewhere.

1 The apostle begins here, therefore, with the fact of the resurrection of Christ, the manifestation of the power of His blessed work, and without which all would be indeed but shadow for us. It is, therefore, the gospel that he preached that he here insists upon, the gospel which they had received and wherein they stood. Outside of it there was no salvation; and salvation at the end could only be theirs who held fast that word which he had preached. We see, too, what place the Old Testament Scriptures had in connection with the gospel, and that even apostolic teaching was not expected to be taken for granted apart from that earnest search of these for which the Bereans are commended. Thus, if Christ died for our sins, it is according to the Scriptures. Startling to the Jew as the cross might be, the Scriptures were many which announced beforehand that which condemned the Jew for his unbelief of it. Even in his unbelief he was the custodian of the Scriptures,—Scriptures whose whole aim and purport were really Christ, from the beginning to the end. Thus he had preached that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The many living witnesses, one would say, were ample to establish the truth, but he will not separate it from the testimony which God had given through all the previous ages, and which makes that wondrous death the centre of history.

How thoroughly the strangeness of such a death on the part of so glorious a Person is set aside by this continuous testimony of the Old Testament! Christ's death is, in fact, the opening up of this, a confirmation of it which sets everything in a new and glorious light, while it gives the New Testament, put in its place thus in connection with the Old, to have its distinct force and supremacy.

"Christ died," then, "for our sins according to the Scriptures." "He was buried,"—a fact which shows how true a death it was He died, and how little His disciples expected even that resurrection which was all necessary for them. "We thought," as one of them said, "that it was He that should have delivered Israel"; as if that thought were almost of necessity buried in the tomb in which they had laid Him. His burial has also for us, as we know, a spiritual application which the epistle to the Romans, as well as that to the Galatians, make known to us. This too, then, is part of the gospel. The least fact in this connection is of immense importance, but the resurrection is the crown of all. He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures. It might have been said, according to His own words, which His enemies could quote, and which were therefore commonly known: "After three days," they quote "the deceiver" as saying, "I will rise again." He *has* risen again, to the confusion of His enemies; but the Scriptures, as we see, are again appealed to, and their evidence put in line with all other as most important in its place.

Here the witness to the resurrection, the testimony existing, was of the most complete character. The apostle enumerates the witnesses, leaving out in a remarkable way that of Mary Magdalene and the women, so important now in the

Christ [c]died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was [d]buried; and that he was [e]raised the third day, according to the scriptures; and that he was [f]seen of Cephas, [g]then of the twelve; afterwards he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the more part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep; afterwards he was seen by James, [h]then by all the apostles, and last of all, he was [i]seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the assembly of God.

c Ps. 22. 15. Isa. 53. 12. Dan. 9. 26. Zech. 12. 10. Zech. 13. 7.
d Isa. 53. 9.
e Ps. 16. 10 Isa. 53. 10.
f Lk. 24. 34.
g Lk. 24. 36.
h Lk. 24. 50. Acts 1. 4.
i Acts 9. 5.

eyes of rationalists as giving birth to the doctrine itself. Important as this was in its place, this testimony of theirs, suited as this first presentation of the spoils of death to the weakest of His people, the non-combatants, as we may say,—yet here he is busy with the testimony of those more manifestly intended as witnesses to the facts of the gospel preached.

Everything is put, therefore, in order. First, He was seen of Cephas—the sweet witness to us of unforgetting love which could thus bring out of all possible despondency the soul of one who had dishonored Him by his denial. Peter must be seen first of all, so that when he sees Him among the twelve directly afterwards, he shall not be ashamed nor afraid, nor in the distance in which that denial might seem to put him.

He was then seen of the twelve, spoken of as that, although the number, in fact, was deficient, sadly deficient, at that time; but God's grace was not going to accept the deficiency, as we know, and the twelve were to stand again as the witness of a grace which could not lack the full competent witness to itself.

Afterward He was seen of above 500 brethren at once. We have no account of this elsewhere, but it was doubtless in Galilee, where, as we know, the Lord had made a special appointment to meet His disciples, and where there would be naturally, upon the mere hint of that, a gathering of as many as could by any means be present. As the apostle wrote, the larger part of these were still in life, though some had fallen asleep. No opportunity here for conspiracy, as is clear! There were too large a number for fraud of any kind,—five hundred false witnesses will surely soon fall out amongst themselves and bring the truth to light, but there never was a hint of this. The resurrection, on the other hand, was that which rallied every faint-hearted disciple to the standard of Christ, and filled them with a boldness which no trouble, no persecution could in any wise check.

He was seen then by James, probably the brother of the Lord, afterwards spoken of as such; one of those brethren of whom it had but too lately been said: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him." He thus has, as we may believe, a representative place here, one of a class of those who were brought into faith, or at least fully so, by the resurrection itself.

Then He was seen by all the apostles, evidently the last gathering at Olivet when He was taken from them, and who were thus witnesses of His ascension into heaven. Apart from all these in time and in character, "last of all," "as of one born out of due time," as he says, when the number of the apostles might seem to have been closed, and from the midst of those who were filled full with Jewish enmity, He was seen by Paul himself, a notable witness of divine grace, the grace that he was to be, above all, the witness of. "The least of the apostles," as he calls himself, not fit even to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the assembly of God. Nevertheless grace here gained its completest expression, Christ His sweetest victory. "By the grace of God," he says, "I am what I am, and His grace which came to me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all." Still, that was grace. He claims nothing for it.

But [j] by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which came to me was not in vain, but I [k] labored more abundantly than they all; but yet not I, [l] but the grace of God with me. Whether, therefore, it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believed.

[j] 1 Tim. 1. 14.
[k] 2 Cor. 11. 23.
[l] Eph. 3. 8.

2 (12-19): The denial of it, what it involved.

2 Now if Christ is preached that he rose from among the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, [m] neither is Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, both our [n] preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. And we are found also false witnesses of God, because we have testified concerning God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up if so be the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised; but if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, [o] ye are yet in your sins. Then also those that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.

[m] 1 Thess. 4. 14.
[n] Rom. 10. 9.
[o] Rom. 4. 25.

3 (20-28): The First-fruits of the sleeping saints.

3 But now is Christ raised from among the dead, [p] the first-fruits of those that are fallen asleep. For since

[p] Col. 1. 18. Rev. 1. 5.

What else could he do as one who had received a grace like this? But still it was grace that wrought through him to the end. But here, then, was the complete testimony. It was of one character, however various the witnesses. "Whether it were I or they," he says, "so we preached, and so ye believed."

2 He goes on now to insist upon the resurrection of Christ as establishing the fact of the resurrection of His people. The one was no more true than the other. If the one were not true, the other was not. Yet there were some saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. So early came unbelief as to such cardinal points! Very likely they took resurrection in its spiritual application, as the apostle himself applies it elsewhere, and denied that anything more was to be expected. The saints were risen with Christ. Here, they might have said, was the whole thing; but the apostle turns upon them with the assurance that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ Himself was not raised; they could not hold the one and deny the other. If they denied the resurrection of Christ, then both the preaching they had received was vain and their faith in it was vain;—the apostles, also, were turned into false witnesses, for their testimony had been that God had raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up if the fact is that the dead are not raised; for if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. "If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." Every hope, therefore, is gone. Those that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. He does not mean, as some strangely put it, annihilated, but that all that with which they had identified themselves, which they built upon for blessing, was gone, and what was the value of a faith which put men only in the suffering condition in which Christians manifestly were, most pitiable, in losing not only their hope for eternity, but their enjoyment of time itself?

3 Thus, except the gospel is altogether false, Christ is risen, and that from among the dead,—the sample of His people in this respect, the first-fruits of those that are fallen asleep. Manifestly, Christ rose by Himself. There was no general resurrection along with Him. It was the "resurrection," as said in Philippians, "out from among the dead;" here simply the first-fruits of those that were to rise from among the dead in after times. This is, as we already know, the character of resurrection as it applies to the Christian. Of a general resurrection of the dead, saint and sinner all at one time, Scripture knows nothing.

[q] by man is death, by man also is the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive. But each in his own rank: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards, they [r] that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall [s] deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The [t] last enemy

[q] Rom. 5.12, 17.
[r] 1 Thess. 4. 15-17.
[s] Matt. 6.10. Matt. 13.43.
[t] Rev. 20.13, 14.

God does not fail to manifest in this way what His people are to Him, and to separate them from that world out of which He has called them. They are those of whom the apostle could say they were fallen asleep. Death had lost its character of terror for them, as it had lost its real power.

Thus, as by man death had come into the world, by man also had come the resurrection of the dead. It was suited that by him who thus might seem altogether to have lost the place in which God created him, by *man*, should the resurrection come. Man as seen in Christ is true Man, the truest Man that possibly could be. Christ assumed not another manhood, whatever dignity He might communicate to it. He is not only Man, but even the Son of man; and thus the woman herself, through whom sin entered and who yielded to the power of the serpent, has her part in the victory through Him. The woman's seed was to bruise the serpent's head. It is the victory of man, truly that, although it is indeed the grace of God through which this has come about; but we must not discredit the manhood of Christ by the thought of His deity. These were in one Person, one blessed Person, who would not be what He is to us if either failed; but thus in Him we find, as we are meant to find, the Creator-God, Victor still through man whom He created, over that which might have seemed the setting aside of all His thoughts with regard to him. Not only are His thoughts not set aside, they are brought to the full, and gloriously developed. The second Man shows us manhood as God intends it, Himself at the same time the Lord from heaven.

"As then in Adam all die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive"; not *all* men, but "all in Christ." The death in Adam is indeed universal, for all Adam's children are naturally in Adam, but it is "all in Christ" who are to be made alive. This does not deny, of course, the resurrection of the wicked, but that which they receive is not truly to be called life. The apostle will not give it that term. All true life is in Christ and thus in the saint, and "all in Christ" shall be brought into the full power and realization of this.

He speaks, as we shall find, of no other here. He does not mention, in fact, the resurrection of the wicked, although he leaves place for it, but "each in his own rank," he says,—"Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Here is the order; but, as already said, we find nothing about the resurrection of the wicked. We have plenty of assurance of it elsewhere, and even here place is manifestly left for it. Death is to be abolished completely, but it is simply, as many other Scriptures assure us, "they that are Christ's" who are raised "at His coming." The whole thought of resurrection, as we find it in the chapter here, is applied to this alone. It is only the saint, who sown in weakness is raised in power, who sown in corruption is raised in incorruption. There can be no possibility of applying such expressions to the resurrection of the wicked, or, therefore, to a general resurrection. It is "they that are Christ's at His coming" to whom all this applies.

But he adds, "then, cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." The special kingdom put into His hands as Man is to be delivered up. Nay, He takes it only for the purpose of bringing everything into subjection to God. That which He taught His disciples to pray,

that is abolished is death. [u] "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith that all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who put all things under him. And when he shall have put all things under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that [v] God may be all in all.

4 (29-34): The trials of the way would be experienced in vain.

[4] Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they also bap-

u Ps. 110. 1. Acts 2. 34, 35. Eph. 1. 22. Phil. 2. 10, 11.

v Rev. 22. 3.

that the Father's kingdom might come, is that which He accomplishes in power by taking Himself the kingdom. It is not for eternity, it is not even for a long period of time, and those who would tell us that the millennium is in fact but the commencement and threshold, as it were, of His kingdom, which is to continue for a long, perhaps indefinite period after it, mistake altogether the purpose of the kingdom itself. The One who takes it is, in it all, the Minister, as He ever was. He takes it, not for His own glory, but for the Father's glory. God indeed must honor the One who has glorified Him, and will put every enemy under His feet. That is right and necessary, but His own thought in it is that He must accomplish that which is in His heart; He must be, as Isaiah expresses it, "the Father of eternity." He must bring things into that condition in which they will abide eternally. Having accomplished this, for Him all is accomplished. He desires no kingdom separate from that of the Father; while, on the other hand, the throne will be ever "the throne of God and of the Lamb." It will never cease to be characterized by the One who now sits upon that throne.

Christ has manifested God for all eternity, and that manifestation abides, but the purpose of the separate kingdom is to bring everything into subjection to God as God. He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet, not after He has put all enemies under His feet, but until this is perfectly accomplished,—and the last enemy which is abolished is death. Thus, then, the final resurrection, the resurrection anticipative of the judgment of the great white throne, is implied here; and all things thus being put under Him, the Son also Himself becomes "subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." For the perfection of eternity, there can be nothing separate and distinct from this divine rule. The establishment of it according to this perfection is just the glory of Christ to accomplish. The Father's kingdom is the kingdom of God in this character, where all the subjects are children, and God is seen in that place in which the epistle to the Ephesians characterizes Him, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," thus "the Father of every family, whether in heaven or earth." All these families are drawn near to God in a perfect relation which Christ has established, and to which He, therefore, gives its full and eternal character.

[4] We now come to a passage as to which there is great difficulty in the minds of many, and which has, therefore, furnished occasion for a multitude of opinions. It does not seem really so difficult after all. The apostle, in speaking of the character of the Christian life as a life of trial, of suffering from persecution, gives the endurance of this as a proof of a common faith in the resurrection of the dead. With regard, therefore, he says, to those "who are being baptized for the dead," (or in place of the dead.) "what will they do if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized instead of the dead? and why do we too stand in jeopardy every hour?" An old belief interpreted this as a mere superstitious baptism of the living in place of those who might die unbaptized. This is worth mentioning as being founded upon a mistake so prevalent, that baptism has in some way to do with the future life instead of being entirely for the present. Baptism is the mark of discipleship. It is no introduction to heaven, but simply to the *kingdom* of heaven, that is, to the company of disciples upon the earth.

tized for them? And why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, after the manner of men, [w]I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what profiteth it me if the dead rise not? Let us [x]eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. [y]Awake to sobriety, as it is right, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak to your shame.

[f] (35 49): The weakness and the power.

[5] But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what sort of body do they come? Thou fool! What thou sowest is [z]not quickened except it die; and

[w] 2 Cor. 1.8.
[x] Eccl. 2.24. Isa. 22. 13.
[y] Rom. 13. 11.
[z] Jno. 12.24.

The thought of baptizing child or adult to carry them safe through to heaven is one of those false ideas which so early tended to build up the Romish system. The sacrament was supposed to minister in some way the grace of which it spoke. All this is destroyed to the root by simply keeping baptism in the place for which God has designed it,—a remission of sins indeed on the part of men, not necessarily on the part of God at all, a salvation in figure, not in fact. It is a New Testament type, and to be treated like all other types, as that which of necessity is infinitely lower than the thing of which it speaks,—yet it had and has its place as a confession of Christ, His title to Lordship over His people; that is, it introduces into the kingdom, and thus we can understand without much difficulty the text here. Christians were dying in how many different ways, and living, as the apostle speaks of himself, in constant view of death,—in that sense, "dying daily." What advantage was it to him, he says, to have fought (as after the manner of men, one might say,) with beasts at Ephesus, as a gladiator in the arena, if there was to be no resurrection of the dead.? Yet men crowded into the ranks that were thus being thinned, took their place by baptism among those who were soldiers in this warfare. Was it all a dream, or were they justified in this faith in resurrection? The apostle has already identified the resurrection with Christianity itself. If there were no resurrection of the dead, Christ were not risen, and if Christ were not risen, those who had faith in Him were deceived and were yet in their sins. Thus we are not to think simply of the one point of doctrine, but of that as implying all else. The resurrection spoke, of necessity, with tremendous power, to those facing death all the time. Even the very body that dropped in the struggle would be taken up again, and taken up in a more glorious fashion. To weaken here would be to weaken all the power over sin, all the energy of the Christian life. "Let no one deceive himself," says the apostle. These things are not to be tolerated. They are not to be thought lightly of, for "Evil communications corrupt good manners." He quotes the heathen poet Menander in this last saying. That was the truth, and they must take heed to it. They must come to sobriety in righteousness and not sin. There were amongst them, evidently, some who had not the true knowledge of God. It was their shame that such should be in their midst. We see, in fact, how, in the decline of Christian vigor, the world comes in.

[5] But people would ask questions still. They must know all about the process of resurrection, and be able to predicate the character of it. They must be able to reason it out. "How are the dead raised?" they ask, "and with what sort of body do they come?" If that were meant for objection, after all it was only folly to argue in that way. The common operations of nature were sufficient to disprove their arguments. What did they know of the mystery of the seed they sowed? They sowed it that it might die, yet without that death it would never live according to that for which it was designed. In order to understand what he is saying here, we must have the true idea of human death, that it is not extinction, but separation, dissolution, the tie between spirit and body being dissolved, the body corrupting indeed, as a consequence of this, but the result,

> that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other; but God giveth it a body as he hath willed, and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of birds, and another of fishes. There are also bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is

the evolution of the new thing in which the seed manifested that for which it was designed. They sowed but bare grain, whether wheat or any other, but they knew quite well that that grain was not to continue grain, but that it would soon be clothed with a body very different from that which it had when sown in the earth. God gave it the body that He had willed for it, and to every seed its own kind of body. Thus, the individuality of what was sown was maintained all through, spite of disorganization. God in it, as in so innumerable cases in nature, has stamped things everywhere with His own stamp of resurrection. Things are in His hand. You may call the process natural because you are so familiar with it, because it is so constantly taking place under your eyes. All the same, God is working in it and through it. That which looks so merely lifeless has, nevertheless, in itself the determination of its future life. No seed produces anything else but its own kind, and yet how different is that which springs out of it from the seed out of which it springs!

Look again, says the apostle, at the various kinds of higher bodies, the flesh of men, the flesh of beasts, and birds and fishes. All these differ from one another. Is it possible to decide as to how these differences take place, to follow the process by which, out of that which seems in the first place so similar, almost identical, these different kinds arise? There are bodies celestial too, and bodies terrestrial. The analogy is less perfect here, and he does not enter into it; only he makes us realize in how many different spheres God works, and how completely He is Master of the creature everywhere. The glory of the celestial is a very different thing from the glory of the terrestrial, and yet each has a distinct glory of its own. If it be only the human body, how marvelously is it made, how perfect is its fitting of part to part! How delicate everywhere the wonderful embroidery by which it is all united together! Good it is indeed to inquire with reverence into all this, and to behold what may be permitted to us of God's ways and workings; but how foolish to dictate to Him how He shall work, or to question His power to work that which is beyond us, even to understand! The glory of the sun differs from the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars, and "star differeth from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead." A mistake is often made with regard to the application here. He is not speaking of the difference of degrees of glory among those who are to be raised from the dead. He is speaking of the difference between the body sown and the body raised, as is plain from what follows. It is quite true that there will be different degrees of glory, but that is not his topic here. It is that which is sown in corruption which is raised in incorruption. Here is the difference, a wonderful contrast indeed. That which is sown in dishonor is raised in glory. That which is sown in weakness is raised in power.

We see, as already said, that the apostle has no thought here of the resurrection of the wicked at all. Little is said about this. We have the fact, but Scripture does not enter into details as to that which is merely sorrowful, and a self-perversion from that which God intended as to men. Scripture does not

sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And so it is written, [a]The first man Adam became a living soul, the [b]last Adam a [c]quickening spirit. But that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is [d]of the earth, made of dust; the [e]second man is of heaven. Such as he made of dust, such also are those made of dust; and such as the heavenly, so also are the heav-

a Gen. 2. 7.
b Rom. 5. 14.
c 2 Cor. 3 17, 18. Col. 3. 4.
d Gen. 2. 7. Gen. 3. 19.
e Jno. 3. 13.

linger on the awful sufferings of the lost, nor enter at large into their condition. For the Christian indeed, it is well-nigh enough to know that those who have refused Christ lose Christ, and that is the most awful penalty, for one who knows Him, that can be conceived. But it is plain that he is speaking here of the resurrection of the saint simply. It is only the saint who is raised in incorruption, in glory, in power. He gives us in what follows a hint at least of the character of the resurrection body. If people ask, "With what body shall they come?" He answers: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." The word "natural" is the same word that we have seen elsewhere in the epistle used with regard to the natural man. The natural man, as we have seen, is the *psychical* man. We have no better word in English. It is the man governed by his psyche or soul simply; therefore by his instincts, appetites, senses, without the due effect upon him of that which is invisible. So with the natural body here. It is the psychical body, the body fitted to the soul, man being made a living soul. That is his characteristic. He has a spirit, but he is not, as he will be, yet characterized by his spirit. The spirit is under limitations, under constraint, as we may say. It works and manifests itself, but it manifests itself through that which is lower than itself. The very material of our thoughts is drawn from that which is seen and tangible. We learn to apply the terms derived from this to that which is unseen and spiritual, but it is, after all, a laborious process, and, as the apostle has told us but a little while ago, we see, as it were, "by a mirror in an enigma." The discipline is, no doubt, a discipline helpful for us and with eternity in view, but it seems for the present to bind us down very much to earth. This bond will be loosed, says the apostle, not by a loss of the body or of the soul. Spirit, soul and body will always make up the man. God's original thought for him will never be set aside, but the body will be fitted perfectly, as now it is not, to the uses of the spirit, and this is the meaning of a spiritual body.

We cannot enter into it in detail, clearly, but we can, nevertheless, understand quite what that means. The body of the resurrection is not spiritual in its material, but it is spiritual in its adaptation to the spirit. There will be nothing any more to weigh upon this. Every part of the man will be in complete harmony. Every part will be in its fullest vigor, a help and not a hindrance to the other. He looks back to creation as he says this. The first Adam became a living soul. With a living soul a natural body is in keeping in the sense in which we have taken this natural body. But for us there is now another Adam, a last One, never to be superseded as the first has been. The last Adam is not characteristically a living soul. He is a quickening Spirit. The life which we derive from Him is life of a higher quality than anything that naturally even, when yet unfallen, we could derive from the first Adam. God's original thought is now capable of being told fully out. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual." The first man, not necessarily as fallen, is of the earth, made of dust; and characterized in that sense by his lowest part; but the second man is of heaven, is char-

enly; and just as we have borne the image of the [one] made of dust, we shall also [f]bear the image of the heavenly.

6 (50-58): The final victory.

6 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: we [g]shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this [h]mortal put on immortality. But when this corrupti-

[f] Rom. 8.29. 1 Jno. 3. 2.

[g] 1 Thess. 4. 15–17.

[h] Rom. 8.11. 2 Cor. 5. 4.

acterized by a heavenly nature. Thus, then, as he that was made of dust, such also are they his offspring who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly, Christ, so also are the heavenly ones, His people. The image of the dust-made Adam is that which we have borne. We shall bear the image of the heavenly.

6 From this the apostle draws the necessary inference, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This does not seem to be the same in meaning as if he said, neither flesh nor blood can inherit the kingdom of God. It is of the connection of the two that he is speaking. The blood applies to the present life. It is the vehicle of change. It is that which implies the need of continual sustenance and renewal. A body which needs no renewal cannot need blood to renew it, and thus the Lord speaks of Himself as risen from the dead, not as having flesh and blood, but as having flesh and bones. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones," He says, "as ye see Me have." He has poured out His blood and left it with the earthly life that He had lived. He has entered upon a new sphere, retaining all that makes Him truly man, but not the conditions of the old earthly life. The conditions are changed. Flesh and blood are not suited for the kingdom of God in this sense of it. He is not, of course, in the least implying that there is any evil in flesh and blood. It was that which was the original creation, as to which God pronounced that it was all very good; but it was good for its own sphere, not good for a higher one. It was good for man in the state of discipline for which God, for his own blessing, designed him at the beginning; but it is part, therefore, of the school-existence, as we may say, which, when the schooling is over, is done away. Still less can that which is corruptible inherit incorruption; so that he says, although we shall not all sleep, yet we shall all be changed. The body must, with us also, be transformed from its present condition, not merely putting off mortality or every trace of weakness and disease, but transformed to a higher condition altogether.

How suddenly will this be accomplished! Think of it, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump!" The last trump was that which in its military sense stood for departure. It was the signal to march, and that is the thought here. God is taking us into another place, and at the last trump, which sounds for this, we shall be changed into a condition corresponding with that which is implied in it. The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed. The "corruptible must put on incorruption." There he is speaking of the dead. "The mortal" (here he speaks of the living) "must put on immortality." Here will be every way the complete triumph over death. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then will come to pass the word that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Everything here applies, as we see again, to the resurrection or transformation of the saints simply. There is no thought of anything besides.

It is here that at last the triumphant appeal can rise: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The apostle answers: "The sting of death is sin." It is that which makes it what it is for man. For the animal

ble shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then will come to pass the word that is written, [i]Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is thy sting? Where, O death, is thy victory?* The sting of death is sin, and [j]the strength of sin the law; but [k]thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

[i] Isa. 25. 8.
[j] Rom. 4.15. Rom. 7. 11.
[k] Rom. 7.25.

* In many good MSS. and versions, the order of "sting" and "victory" is reversed. In a number also "hades" is substituted for the second "death." Both changes are supposed to be for the sake of conformity to the Septuagint.

it has no such sting as it has for him; but "the strength, too, of sin is the law"—a vigorous statement quite in keeping with the fearlessness of the apostle. Romans has shown us fully in what way we are to interpret this. The law gave sin its strength in two ways; first of all, by there being in it no power of deliverance, but power of condemnation only. Thus sin, according to it, reigned and must reign in death. But again, law gave sin its strength by the very fact that in prohibiting it, it aroused all the evil nature of man to resistance. The doer of his own will refused the curb of that which restrained it, and the result was that the evil under this treatment became not only the more manifest but the more intensely evil,—open rebellion against God his Maker. Law for us is past, with the reign of sin also. At the time that is contemplated here sin will have passed entirely. What a deliverance! "Thanks be" indeed "to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" The result of our contemplation is to be the turning, in the meantime, with energy, to the work of the Lord that is in our hands. Every shadow has been removed from our path. Only the sure recompense of everything done for Him remains for us. What trial can daunt one who is in the full energy of this? "Be steadfast therefore," says the apostle, "immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Div. 4.

We close the epistle, as in almost all cases, with some references to present matters. They are quite supplementary to the epistle in its general character.

1. With regard to the collection for the saints, we see how constantly the apostle is in remembrance of what had been urged upon him at Jerusalem, that he should remember the poor. As he had directed the assemblies of Galatia, so also he now directed them. Upon the first day of the week, the Christian's day, each was to put by him in store as God had prospered him, in order that when he came there might be no collections needed to be made. He did not want this to be done evidently under the mere influence of his presence among them. He sought that it should be the expression of their own deliberate purpose, and under the influence, as one may say, of what the first day of the week meant for them all. He would not have, as is plain, mere desultory giving, not mere temporary impulse, but a systematic recognition of the goodness of God and of the need we have of one another. When he came he would send with commendatory letters those whom they would approve, to carry their bounty to Jerusalem; and if it were thought that he himself should go, they should go with him. How little he himself knew all that this would imply for him! But his heart, as we see, never forgot Jerusalem, whether in its joy or sorrow. He was going to them when he went through Macedonia, and thought that he might abide and spend the winter with them, that they might set him forward whithersoever he was going. He would not see them now by the way, but waited for the time

DIVISION 4. (Chap. xvi.)

Practical exhortation.

1 (xvi. 1 9): Directions as to the collection.

1. NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let each of you put by him in store as he may have prospered, that no collections may be made when I come. And when I arrive, [l] whomsoever ye shall approve, these I will send with letters to carry your bounty to Jerusalem; and if it be fit that I also should go, they shall go with me. Now I will come unto you [m] when I go through Macedonia, for I do go through Macedonia; and it may be that I shall abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may set me forward whithersoever I go. For I will not see you by the way, for I hope to remain some time with you, if the Lord permit. But I am tarrying in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a [n] great and effectual door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

2 (10-18): Various ministry.

2. Now, if Timotheus come, see that he be among you without fear; for he doeth the work of the Lord, even as I. Let no one, therefore, [o] despise him; but set him forward in peace, that he may come to me; for I await him with the brethren. Now concerning our brother [p] Apollos, I begged him much that he would come to

l 2 Cor. 8.19.

m 2 Cor. 1. 15, 16.

n Acts 19. 20.

o 1 Tim. 4. 12.

p ch. 1. 12.

when he might hope to remain a while. Their condition evidently would influence him in this respect. He wanted time for the effect of his present letter to be manifest, and to see the work of grace in the revival of spiritual energy amongst them. He tells them of the work in Ephesus which was soon to detain him and which might call back their thoughts to the work which had been in Corinth when in time past he labored there. Is it not another stir for their memories and a calling back to the first love there manifested? A great and effectual door God had opened to him, as we know, and the many adversaries are no disproof of this, but one of the common signs that God was working.

2. He commends Timothy to them. They need not have any fear with regard to him. He did the work of the Lord as Paul himself did. No one was, therefore, to despise him, as, on account of his youth, evidently they might be tempted to, but set him forward in peace, that he might go to the apostle who was waiting for him,—an additional proof of his own esteem for him who fulfilled his name as one who honored God. Next, as to Apollos, we see that the use of his name which had been made in Corinth had in no wise lessened the apostle's confidence in him. He had begged him much to go to them with the brethren. On the other hand, it was not in the mind of Apollos to go then, but he would come when he had opportunity. The motives we can only conjecture, although it is quite possible to do this on account of Apollos' former work amongst them and the parties which existed. We see that he had his own course also, independent of the apostle, who does not in the least exhort him with apostolic authority, but leaves him in freedom to his own responsibility. He bids them all stand fast in the faith, quit themselves like men, be strong; but this strength was to be manifested in loving service. Such was that, no doubt, of the household of Stephanas, which, as the first fruits of Achaia, had taken the lead too in a devotedness of this kind. The saints were to recognize those who ministered to them, and to be subject in love, not only to these, but to every one who could show himself a helper in the work and a true laborer.

you with the brethren, and it was not at all his mind to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity. [q]Watch, [r]stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves [s]like men, [t]be strong. Let all things be done by you in love. And I exhort you, brethren, (ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye also [u]be subject to such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth. But I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, [v]acknowledge those that are such.

3 (19-24): Heart-manifestations.

3. The assemblies of Asia salute you. [w]Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the [x]assembly that is in their house. All the brethren salute you. [y]Salute ye one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul, [z]with mine own hand. If any one love not the Lord [Jesus Christ]* let him be anathema Maran-atha.† The [a]grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

q 1 Pet. 5. 8.
r 2 Thess. 2. 15.
s ch. 14. 20.
t Eph. 6. 10.
u Heb. 13. 17.
v Phil. 2.29. 1 Thess. 5. 12.
w See Acts 18. 2.
x Rom.16.5.
y Rom. 16. 16.
z Col. 4. 18. 2 Thess. 3. 17. cf. Rom.16. 22. Gal. 6. 11.
a Rom. 16. 20.

* A few good MSS. omit. † Accursed: Our Lord cometh (Syriac).

Stephanas himself, with Fortunatus and Achaicus had come to him, supplying what he says had been lacking upon their part. This does not refer to more than spiritual refreshment, as we see from 2 Cor. xi. 10.

3. We have now the return greetings of the saints with whom he is, among whom Aquila and Priscilla have naturally a special place. It was at Corinth that the apostle had first found these, and where, in all probability, they had been brought into the faith of Christ. They now stood in connection with an assembly gathered with them, and which had its meeting-place in their house. This might be both a cheer and an exhortation.

The salutation with his own hand was, as we have seen before, the token in every epistle that Paul wrote. Appended to it here is his solemn pronunciation of judgment from the Lord at His coming upon every one who did not love the Lord. That is the force of Anathema Maranatha. It is evident how serious the condition was at Corinth, which impelled him to such words as these. He adds, as customarily: "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" and "my love be with you all in Christ Jesus."

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE second epistle to the Corinthians, as already said, is an appendix to the first, and as such has for its subject, ministry. We have already seen that the very idea of the body of Christ supposes ministry. The various qualifications and functions of the members make each of them in his place a minister to all the rest. There are some, no doubt, who are more conspicuous than others in this, and in the epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle is himself the example of ministry in its highest character, and as manifested in a public way. We must not let this divert us from the larger thought of ministry as connected with the whole body of Christ and which in the very first chapter here the apostle puts so distinctly before us. Paul was the pattern Christian, as we have seen in the epistle to the Philippians. He is the pattern in his conversion, as he shows us in his epistle to Timothy. He was a pattern even in his previous condition, at once chief of legalists and chief of sinners. He is here pattern for us in the ministry of Christ; but we must not let his pre-eminence in this crowd out the larger thought, as in most commentaries upon the epistle it practically does. We might as well allow the individuality of Paul as a Christian to prevent the application self-evidently to be made to all other Christians. Ministry has its various characters, of course, and in some forms is not only not public, but may be of a very unobtrusive and unofficial kind; but the things which seem to be more feeble are necessary, as the same apostle has reminded us; and we are not to allow it to make us think of ministry as if it were the exclusive prerogative or duty of a certain class. The epistle thus widens from a mere defence of himself by Paul to the Corinthians,—or at most a mere ministry of his to local needs in that assembly,—it widens, I say, from this to that which is of the most general interest to us all; the principles at least become of universal application. We find this, as already stated, at the very beginning of the epistle.

The first division shows us the unity of the assembly in the mind of God, who controls all happenings to the individual members for profit to the whole.

The second division shows us, in fact, the ministry of the whole Church looked at as the epistle of Christ, to be read and known of all

men. This cannot surely be apostolic simply. It takes the whole Church to be the one epistle. This is carried on further in the chapters following, in which we see how the life comes in with its witness-bearing, as well as the word held forth by believers. We have then the testing and trial which is clearly true as to all Christians; then service in the form of the communication to those who have need, on the part of those who can supply that need. Then we find the overcoming of the difficulties of the way, (the opposition of Satan always seeking to destroy the testimony of Christ,) and the *power* to overcome. And we close finally with that which is the perfecting of the ministry; in which we see, on the one hand, the nearness to God in which those who seek earnestly to serve His people are found, and along with this the discipline they nevertheless need, and in which they learn that the power of Christ resting upon us enables us to glory in the very infirmities which call in that power. This gives us the divisions of the epistle, which are in general, with only one exception, two chapters to a division, the exception being that of the third chapter, in which we have the ministry of the new covenant put in glorious contrast with the ministration of the old. The divisions are therefore:

1. (Chaps. i., ii.): The unity of the body as recognized of God in the control of all that relates to every part for the good of the whole.
2. (Chap. iii.): Gives us ministry in its necessarily new covenant character in contrast with all that could be called such in the old.
3. (Chaps. iv., v.): Shows us the radiancy of the glory of Christ in the earthen vessels, which, by their very weakness and nothingness, only make the source of it more manifest.
4. (Chaps. vi., vii.): Shows us the testing and trial in the world through which we pass.
5. (Chaps. viii., ix.): The communication for the need of the needy on the part of those who have ability to supply the need.
6. (Chaps. x., xi.): Gives us the overcoming of the difficulties and of the power of the enemy, which would hinder the work; while
7. (Chaps. xii., xiii.) gives us the perfecting of the ministry by the ministry of God on His side to those who minister, and the discipline of the way which stamps them only with that weakness which makes them glory in His strength.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE

CORINTHIANS

DIVISION 1. (Chaps. i., ii.)

The unity of the body as recognized of God in the control of all that relates to every part for the good of the whole.

1 (1.1-7): The principle.

1. PAUL an apostle of Christ Jesus [a]by the will of God, and the [b]brother Timotheus, to the assembly of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia. [c]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

a 1 Cor. 1.1. Eph. 1. 1. b Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. 1 Thess. 1.1. 2 Thess. 1.1. c Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. Gal. 1.3, etc.

NOTES.

Div. 1.

THE importance of the first division is plainly seen here. It is an introduction to that which follows, and puts us upon the right track for the interpretation of all that follows. It is very striking, therefore, to find here insisted on, the unity of the assembly as recognized of God in the trial of all that happens with regard to any of the members of the body, making them thus more fruitful in their service to the rest. It is immensely important that we should get the idea of ministry which thus results. The tendency has been—while no Christian surely would deny that service in some sort belongs to all the people of God—yet to make what is commonly called ministry too much the service of a class, and official. We need, all of us, to wake up fully to the fact that ministry is nothing else than that service of Christ in all our life, to which we are pledged by the very fact that we are Christians. It is not by any choice of ours that we have been baptized by the Spirit into the one body of Christ. Our place and necessary duty in relation to all other members is thus clear. We may indeed have to ask ourselves what is our own distinct function in this way, —a question which we shall not answer by looking simply at ourselves and seeking to define it by such an examination. Love, as the apostle has already taught us, is the spirit of ministry. It is that which makes us servants as a matter of course to the needs of others, and here there is no restrictive band thrown around us to hinder the free motion of love. It is as we are led out to help in whatever way we may find ourselves able to help, that that ability on our part becomes more and more known to ourselves, and we fall more intelligently into the place which God has given us. Officialism has always been a restraint upon this mutual service. A large number have thus been systematically deprived of even the very opportunity of knowing what their gifts might be; and the blessing which God would thus have given us has been limited, and, as far as we could do it, forfeited by us. The heart is that which will teach us here better than the head, and love is not the blind thing which men have painted it, but, on the contrary, that which is the very key to wisdom. "He that winneth souls is wise." The desire to do this will make us to seek out ways of doing it which will soon justify themselves, or find needed correction in the field of service itself.

1. The apostle associates himself in his address to the Corinthians now, in his constant, gracious way, with the brother Timotheus; while he has to maintain, in the state of things which we know was at Corinth, his own distinct apostleship by the will of God. He writes, therefore, with authority, not simply by

[d]Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and the [e]God of all encouragement; who encourageth us in all our tribulation, that [f]we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation, through the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God. For as [g]the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so through Christ doth our encouragement also abound. And whether we are in tribulation, it is for your encouragement and salvation, which is wrought in endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer, (and our hope for you is stedfast;) or whether we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement and salvation: knowing that as ye are [h]partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the encouragement.

d Eph. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3.
e Rom. 15. 5.
f cf. Col. 1. 24.
g Phil. 2. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 10.
h Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12.

way of advice; and we see, in fact, all the way through the epistle, how he claims this authority, while desiring to use it with all the gentleness of grace. He writes to the assembly at Corinth, but with a larger reference also to all the saints who were in all Achaia, wishing them in the first place, as that which would qualify for all that he will urge upon them here, "grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace is, as we know, our fundamental need, as well as that in which we stand with God, and peace is that which may well be our possession as we realize the grace in which we stand; but there is also a peace which flows from communion with the Father and with the Son, and which is essential, therefore, to all Christian walk.

The apostle writes as full of the comfort with which the news which he has just got from Corinth inspires him. He blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as "the Father of compassion and the God of all encouragement," and immediately gives us in this way a key-note of the epistle: "For God encourageth us," he says, "in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation through the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God." How beautiful is the fruitfulness of sorrow thus for us, as that which only makes us more deeply to realize God as a living God and the way in which He cares and ministers to us all! God is, after all, the great Minister. We are only imitators of God in this way, feeble as we are. It is ministry upon which every one of us depends, a ministry in which He may use and does use His people, and in which also the very circumstances of the way, however adverse they may seem, are nevertheless made all to work together for good to them that love God. How conscious we must be, if we have any right Christian experience at all, of the effect of trouble thus upon us, of how, when we draw near to God by means of it, He becomes truly more the living God, to be counted upon for all our need! The trouble of which he speaks is that which has resulted to him from the place which was his in the world as devoted to Christ. The sufferings of Christ abounded to one to whom to live was Christ and nothing else. It is not disciplinary suffering that he is speaking of, therefore; although it is true that, perhaps, in all suffering even where the highest privilege is found, nevertheless we are such that discipline may be in it, perhaps is commonly in it, and is part of its blessing. But that is not what is spoken of here. If the suffering of Christ abounded to him, so in proportion did his encouragement through Christ abound also. Both things, the trouble and the encouragement, were not simply for himself, but for all Christians also. Their encouragement would be found in endurance of the same sufferings, and their salvation or deliverance out of them was the crown of his suffering. From it in due time the deliverance came.

It is here that is found the ability for helping one another upon the basis of

2 (8-14): The sentence of death in ourselves.

2. For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our tribulation [i]which befell us in Asia, that we were pressed exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we ourselves had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in [j]God who raiseth the dead; who delivered us out of so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we confide that he will also yet deliver us; ye also laboring together by [k]supplication for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, [l]thanks may be given by many on our behalf. For our glorying is this, the [m]testimony of our conscience, that in holiness* and sincerity before God, ([n]not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God,) we have behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you. For we write no other things unto you than what ye well know and recognize, and I hope will recognize to the end, even as ye also have recognized us in part, that we are your glorying, even as [o]ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

3 (15-22): The inworking of the word and Spirit.

3. And with this confidence I was minded to come before unto you, that ye might have a second benefit; and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from

i Acts 19.23. 1 Cor.15.32.
j Rom.4. 17.
k Rom. 15. 30.
l ch. 4. 15. ch. 9. 11.12.
m 1 Thess. 2. 10.
n 1 Cor. 2.1, 4.
o 1 Thess. 2. 19.

* Many read, "simplicity."

such common suffering and such experiences of the goodness and power of God. He had a stedfast hope with regard to them, an assurance that all this trial would work but blessing in regard to them, and now his own present encouragement by them would have its reflex influence upon them, for their own encouragement and as working out their deliverance also. If they were partakers of the sufferings on the one hand, they would be also of the encouragement on the other. Thus God has united His people together.

2. The apostle goes on to speak more of the trouble in which he had lately been, and of the effect upon himself, an effect which God would always produce in us from trial of this sort. He had been pressed exceedingly, beyond his own power to sustain it. Life itself he had given up as hopeless; but when God brought him down to this, and when the sentence of death, as it were, was written upon him, it was only that God might manifest Himself as the God of resurrection, a God acting in power beyond all thoughts of man, whatever the circumstances may be. The apostle had found deliverance. Assurance had been confirmed with him that God would always deliver him. He trusted Him for this, therefore, while recognizing the value of the prayers of the saints on his behalf, prayers which were already thus a manifest form of ministry to him; and the result with God would consequently be, in the grace bestowed upon him, thanksgiving on the part of many in his behalf. In seeing this, he is comforted by the assurance, the testimony of his own conscience, that in holiness and sincerity before God he had behaved himself in the world and even especially towards them. They were already recognizing this; and he wrote nothing else than he was sure they would recognize, and that he was their glorying, as they too were his in the coming day of the Lord Jesus.

3. He goes on now to speak of what might seem to have been a failure upon his part. He had been minded to come to them before this, to pass by them into Macedonia, and again to come from Macedonia to them, that they might set him afterward on his way to Judea; but in fact he had not done this. Had that been mere fickleness on his part, so that what he purposed to-day he would set aside to-

Macedonia to come to you, and of you to be set forward on my way to Judæa. Having therefore this purpose, did I show fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that there should be with me yea yea, and nay nay? But God is faithful, that our word toward you is not yea and nay. For the [p] Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and [q] Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For [r] whatever may be the promises of God, in him is the yea, wherefore also through him is the [s] amen, for glory to God by us. Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath [t] anointed us, is God, who also hath [u] sealed us, and given us the [v] earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

4 (23–ii. 4): The trial experienced.

4. Now I call God for a witness upon my soul that to spare you I came not yet to Corinth. Not that we have [w] lordship over your faith, but are helpers in your joy: for [z] by faith ye stand. But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you in grief. For if *I* grieve you, who then is he that maketh me glad, but he who is grieved by me? And I wrote this also, that when I came, I might not have grief from those of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you, with many tears; [y] not that ye might be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly towards you.

p Acts 9. 20.
q Acts 18. 5.
r Rom. 15. 8.
s cf. Rev. 3. 14.
t 1 Jno. 2. 27.
u Eph. 1. 13. Eph. 4. 30.
v ch. 5. 5. Eph. 1. 14.
w 1 Pet. 5. 3.
x Rom. 11. 20.
y ch. 7. 9.

morrow? Was there, in this way, a kind of yea and nay with him, as earnest a nay as the yea before might seem to be earnest? He desires to rid them of any thought of this kind; and it is beautiful to see how he insists that his life took character from his preaching, even in such details as he is speaking of. The Son of God who had been preached among them by himself and Silas and Timotheus was *He* preached as One in whom there was yea and nay, the author of a mere conditional and uncertain blessing? Assuredly not. All in Him was certainty; all the promises of God were in Him yea, in affirmation; and in Him too amen, in the answer of faith and experience to His assurance; that God might have His due glory as alone He could in this way. As to the position of the Christian, God had established them all together in Christ, with whom there could be no failure. Salvation was in His hands and in no other. He had complete control of all circumstances, and grace to meet all possible necessities. Then, too, the power answering to this, the power of the Spirit, had been manifest. They were anointed thus and sealed. The power communicated had marked them out in the fullest way as those who belonged to God, and thus secured His coming in on behalf of those who were His representatives upon the earth. The Spirit Himself was thus the pledge and earnest of the future in their hearts. Here all was certainty. Nothing was merely contingent. Nothing depended upon man, whatever shape God's grace might have to take in view of human frailty and uncertainty.

4. He goes on to explain the real reason for this apparent failure. It was to spare them that he had not come to Corinth. Their state was such that he was afraid of having to exercise apostolic authority in a manner that might seem to make him lord rather than servant. His absence from them was the fruit of his

5 (ii.5-11): The ways of God as ways for the assembly.

5. But [z]if any one hath caused grief, he hath not grieved me but in part (that I may not overcharge) all of you. Sufficient to such an one is this rebuke, which was of the many;* so that, on the contrary, ye should rather show grace and encourage, lest, perhaps, such an one should be swallowed up with excessive grief. Wherefore I exhort you to assure him of [your] love. For to this end also I have written, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient as to everything. But to whom ye forgive anything, I also; for I also, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sakes in the person of Christ; that we might not let Satan get an advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of his [a]devices.

[z] 1 Cor. 5.

[a] Eph. 6.11.

6 (12–17): The overcoming.

6. Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no [b]rest in my spirit when I found not Titus my

[b] ch. 7. 5.

* Greek, "the more."

love toward them. It was to call into exercise the faith in which they stood. They were to act in the responsibility which was their own, and he left them free to act thus. Nor was it his mind to come to them again in grief. They were the very people who in their prosperity made him glad. Why should he be anxious to grieve them? And the object of his writing now was also that he might not have grief from those in whom he ought to rejoice. He had confidence also on his own part now, that his joy was really the joy of all of them. His previous epistle, with all the touch of severity that might be in it, was only the witness of the love which he had more abundantly towards them, and which was working for their blessing in this way.

5. The apostle now takes up the case of discipline to which he had to exhort them in the previous epistle. The sorrow which had been in his heart was really theirs as well as his, and he did not want them now to press his part in it in such a way as to hinder the manifestation of their love, which should be when this sorrow of theirs had taken effect in the breaking down of the offender. They had need now to show grace and encourage, for fear the one in question should be swallowed up with the excessive grief which he seemed to be manifesting. It is quite possible for us to go from the extreme of laxity to the extreme of rigidity, these things both springing really out of a lack of true love, which can neither, on the one hand, make light of the evil, nor on the other, lose sight of its object, which is to win the sinner from his sin. He could, therefore, now exhort them to assure this person of their love; and here he desired that they would be as obedient to the word from him as they had been obedient before in the active discipline itself. If they forgave anything, he too forgave. He was with them in it and as the representative of Christ also in his apostolic character, forgiveness indeed being the very triumph of grace over sin and the triump over Satan too, in whose hands the offender had been put, but who would seek now to drive him to despair, and so to get an advantage over the flock of Christ Himself. Such were his devices, of which Christians should not be ignorant.

6. He goes back now to speak of his own personal exercises in relation to them. He had come to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door had been there opened to him by the Lord; yet his anxiety with regard to Corinth would not permit him to remain there. He did not find Titus as he expected, who had been sent to them, and his anxiety was such that he left even this open door and departed into Macedonia to find news of them. He does not pronounce upon this whether, after all, it had been the Lord's mind that he should depart; but

brother; but bidding them adieu, I departed into Macedonia. But thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place. For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in those that are saved and in those that perish: [c] to the one a savor of death unto death, to the other a savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many who make a [d] trade of the word of God, but as of [e] sincerity, but as of God, before God we speak in Christ.

c *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

d 1 Tim. 6. 5.

e *ctr.* Phil. 1. 16.

there could be no question how, with such an one as the apostle, it manifested his anxiety on their behalf; but God had come in. Everywhere he found it so. God was always leading in triumph in Christ He does not say, "maketh us to triumph" exactly. The triumph was that of God Himself, God who had unfailing interest in all that belonged to Christ, and who manifested it thus in those who were identified with Him upon earth. Through them He was making manifest the savor of His knowledge in every place; and this, too, where the gospel might seem not to be a success, as where it was manifestly such: in those that were being saved and in those that were perishing. Those who preached it were still a sweet savor of Christ to God; and He delighted in the publication of His power and grace in Him; Christ always a sweet savor to Him, even though it might be in result to those who rejected Christ only a savor of death, the anticipation of worse death,—on the other hand, a savor of life unto life to those who accepted it. Who then was sufficient for such things as these? Their sufficiency had manifestly to be of God Himself, who was the great preacher of Christ in the power of His Spirit, who had come to glorify Him at all times. Yet the human instrumentality was not set aside by this, but confirmed rather; and it required, on the part of those whom God was thus using, that earnest sincerity which was of God; who did not make, therefore, a trade of the word of God, converting it into a means of following out their own self-interest, but who, in the presence of God, where Christ was, spoke in His Name.

Div. 2.

The second division now dwells upon the characters of this ministry of Christ, which was, therefore, the ministry of the new covenant, in contrast with all that could be called ministry in connection with the old. Ministry of such sort, as we see it in the apostle, there was not in Israel,—a ministry, that is, which went out to the world with the offer of God's grace to it. In Israel itself God was shut up. The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest; the light had not yet shone out through a rent veil. As a consequence, there was in one sense no God to proclaim. Law was in this sense enmity, as the apostle has said to the Ephesians. It was something which stood between God and man, a hindrance, as one may say, on both sides. Man could not go in to God. God could not come out, as it was in His heart to come out, to man. One may ask why then this should be, if it was in God's heart to show Himself? The apostle has answered already, in the Epistle to the Romans, that there had to be a "due time" in which, when man was found still "without strength," Christ should die "for the ungodly." The discovery of the need had to precede the ministry to it; and alas, man resists the discovery of this need. It is not sufficient for God even to declare it. Man must make the experiment for himself. He will be satisfied with nothing short of personal experience; and thus God, after the testimony of His grace,—which, in fact, had begun in Abraham,—had to allow the law to come in, in order to exhibit sin in its true character, and the hopelessness of man's condition apart from grace.

Thus it was the special priesthood which characterized Israel, a priesthood

DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii.)

The ministry of the new covenant in contrast with the old.

1 (iii. 1-6): Its sufficiency as of God.

1. DO we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some, [f]epistles of commendation to you or from you? *Ye* [g]are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: being made manifest to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the [h]Spirit of the living God; not on

[f] Acts 18 27.
[g] 1 Cor. 9. 2.
[h] *cf.* ver. 17, 18.

which was not national, as God had conditionally offered it should be in the wilderness. They were *not* a "kingdom of priests"; but the nation, put into the distance by their own departure from God and from the terms of their covenant with Him, had need of those who could approach God for them in a way they could not for themselves. Even so, the priests who approached were, after all, of the same nature and character as the people for whom they stood. They were thus an officially typical priesthood, but not the reality of it according to God. They were the shadow, and not the substance. Thus, they themselves could not go into the innermost holy place. They were shut out, as others, by the veil. The one exception of the high-priest's entrance on one day of the year only, with the blood to put upon the mercy seat, was a mere glimpse,—full of encouragement, doubtless, of that which was to come,—a finger pointing on, as always throughout the law, to that which was beyond the law itself. But thus there was a priesthood, but no ministry; that is, no ministry which now we should call such, a ministry in which the heart of God could come out as He desired. Thus the testimony was shut up in Israel, although indeed, as has often been said, it was placed upon the public highway of the world, so as to be accessible to man if he desired it; but it did not yet show God seeking as He really sought, because as yet it was not plain that they whom He sought were lost ones. For the ungodly and yet without strength,—when that was proved,—Christ in due time died. Now there is a *ministry*, a way of access to God opened by His own hand, a way out for God in His love to manifest Himself to all His creatures,—a world-wide testimony, therefore. The character of Christian ministry is thus in many respects in complete contrast with anything before it. It is plain also, by what we find here, that this ministry is not merely one of word,—a gospel, however sweet and wonderful,—but it is a testimony in life as well as in speech, as we are to see directly, an "epistle of Christ to be read and known of all men," written no more like the old, upon the tables of stone, but upon fleshy tables of human hearts. Here then, as is plain, we pass beyond the bounds of any mere official ministry and find one which belongs to the whole Church of God, and which the Church of God as a whole is alone competent for. Individuals are not the *epistles* of Christ, but the whole Church of God is that which forms the *epistle*. We may each have our part in this testimony; but the testimony of the whole is the only sufficient one; so far, at least, as man's failure allows us to speak of sufficiency anywhere.

1. The doctrine is introduced incidentally, as so commonly in the epistles, with the most important truths. He appeals to them amid all this questioning which has been going on amongst them,—Did they really need epistles of commendation to them, or did he need epistles of commendation from them to others? As to this latter, *they* were his letter of commendation, (a beautiful and tender appeal to them, this,) "an epistle written," he says, "in our hearts, known and read of all men." It would touch them indeed to ask themselves, with all the love in which he had come amongst them, how far they were truly a letter commendatory of him. But he goes on to speak of what was not local, but the general character of the Church of Christ, and that they were the epistle of Christ in contrast with the legal message to men, written on tables of stone; a letter of commendation of Christ Himself, written by the Spirit of the living

tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart. And such confidence have we through Christ Godward: not that we are competent of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our competency is of God; who hath also made us competent as ministers of a [t]new covenant, [j]not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter [k]killeth, but the [l]spirit giveth life.

[t] Jer. 31. 31-34. Heb. 8. 8–13.
[j] Rom. 7. 6.
[k] Rom. 7. 5, 10, 11.
[l] Jno. 6. 63.

God. We see, I doubt not, in the end of the chapter, how this letter has been written; but it is plainly the responsibility which the whole Church has as representing Christ in the world. By their confession of Him they were identified with Him, and would give Him character in the eyes of men around them. How solemn a position is this! We cannot, as Christians, escape from the place of testimony. The only question will be, is the testimony for or against? Could it be possible that they would permit the confession of One to whom they owed their all to be to His discredit instead of to His praise? But he is not looking at this side of things now. He speaks of that which was essentially true with them as those in whom the Spirit of God had wrought. He is speaking encouragingly, not to blame; and, as a fact, this testimony could not be a local one merely. As we have said, he does not speak of individuals being epistles of Christ. No individuals could be sufficient for this. The brightest saint would have very much lacking in him. The records that we have of the saints of old have all, we may say, exhibited some conspicuous defect, while yet the general character of a saint might be evident. Here the testimony of one supplements the testimony of another; and thus, through that of the whole, Christ is borne witness to in a way in measure competent.

It is plain that this witness must be a true ministry. The formal preaching of the Word, while it has its necessary place, and even the prominent place,—yet, after all, unless in connection with its effects in the life, would come sadly short. This thought of ministry we shall find accompanies us through some chapters following. Those who hold forth the Word of life, as the apostle has told us in Philippians, must be "the sons of God, blameless and harmless, without rebuke, and in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation shining as lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15, 16). Such lights he is indeed thinking of here, those who reflect the light from a heavenly source, from One who shines there brighter than the sun.

But thus, God was no more addressing men with a message carved upon inanimate tables, but by living messengers, His own wonderful workmanship. Such confidence with regard to them the apostle had through Christ. He knew that, alas, the flesh was in believers, and even prominent in them, and that his confidence as to them must be confidence through the Lord. But this is, therefore, an unfailing ground of confidence, and of this,—satisfied that they were after all truly the divine workmanship,—he could speak as he does here. It was not to make much of himself, of his competency in the ministry which God had given him. All competency was derived from God Himself, who in fact works in all this for the glory of Christ, and will not suffer Christ to be without His testimony amongst men. Thus had he with others been made the competent ministers of a new covenant, a covenant not of letter, as the old covenant of the law, but a covenant which was of spirit. In fact, the new covenant is, as we know, entirely the declaration of God's "I will"s: not a demand upon man, but an assurance of that which He works for and in men. It is of grace, therefore, necessarily. The covenant of law, the letter, killed; but the power of the Spirit which effected that of which the new covenant speaks, gives life.

We are carefully to observe that he is speaking here not of the letter of *Scripture*, as some would have it, but of the letter of the old covenant, which was the law. It is not true that the letter of Scripture kills. Even the letter of law, apart from its covenant character, is not against us, clearly, but the safe lesson

2 (7-11): In contrast with the ministry of condemnation and death.

2. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones came in with [m]glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses on account of the glory of his face, [a glory] which is annulled, how shall not the [n]ministration of the Spirit subsist in glory? For if the [o]ministration of condemnation be glory, much rather doth the [p]ministration of righteousness abound in glory. For even that which was made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the surpassing glory; for if that which is annulled was with glory, much more that which remaineth [subsisteth] [q]in glory.

m Ex. 34. 29-35.
n Gal. 3. 5. Gal. 4. 4 6.
o Rom.3.19.
p Rom.4.24.
q ch. 4. 4, 6.

of an old schoolmaster under whom indeed we may not be, but whose lessons still do us good. But the covenant of law kills, and only that. If law is to be the condition under which we live, we shall soon find that it is a ministration of death and not of life.

2. Now then comes the contrast, briefly yet fully told out,—the law with the ministration of death indeed. We have seen in Romans how really it had that character. When the commandment came to the apostle, when he realized the power of it, sin revived, he says, and he died. Death also was the public sentence written upon man at large, of which the law availed itself in order to work conviction in the souls of those to whom it was addressed. The death of which it spoke was just what we ordinarily call such. Upon every child of man it stamped the character of a convicted criminal, one sentenced as such to be removed from the sphere into which creation had brought him, and no one, however comparatively well he might appear in contrast with those around him, could escape this sentence. "Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Grace indeed has brought in a greater blessing, but it leaves this testimony unaffected. It is a blessing of grace, not a reward of works. We are debtors simply to the compassion of God, and in order to realize the blessing we have to accept in that sense the sentence of death in ourselves. Then indeed the glory of the new covenant appears to us, and God's wonderful and sweet "I will"s are the joy and satisfaction of the soul.

Yet this ministration of death, which was therefore a true ministration, a thing meant of God in its results to be mercy to man, whatever the gravity of the sentence which it carried, yet this ministration of death written and engraven on stones came in with glory. It is plain that he is not speaking of the first giving of the law at all, but of the second, for he immediately refers this glory to that which was upon the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount after he had been there the second time, a glory which they could not look upon, though it were merely the reflection of the divine. Thus he had to cover himself with a veil when he stood amongst the people; and that characterized all the glory of the law, which was essentially a veiled glory. The second giving of the law had, in fact, unveiled in a certain sense the glory of God as the first had not. It was not the divine Face indeed revealed, but, as He says to Moses, the glory of the "back parts." His face could not be seen. A solemn word this therefore, for those who are the disciples of Moses, the assurance that according to law God could, even when He was showing real mercy, have His face turned away, and in mere pity His back turned upon men! They were not competent to see Him face to face. No man could see Him and live. No one could stand before Him upon those terms, try it as often as they might.

This opportunity of protracted trial was what the second giving of the law provided for. It was that which made the law, as it were, a pool of Bethesda, a pool into which man might get, just as if he were *not* "impotent." For an impotent man, it had no help. God, therefore, says to the wicked, that

3 (12-18): The glory in the face of Moses and that in Christ's face.

3. Having, therefore, such hope, we use great boldness; and are not as Moses, who put a [r]veil upon his face, so [s]that the children of Israel could [t]not fix their eyes on the end of that which is annulled. But their thoughts have been [u]darkened; for until this very day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remaineth unremoved, which in Christ is done away. But unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil lieth upon their heart. But [v]whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the [w]Lord is the Spirit, and [x]where the Spirit of the Lord is, [there is] liberty. But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

r Ex. 34.33-35.
s cf. Matt. 13. 13.
t Rom. 10.3, 4.
u Jno. 9. 39.
v cf. Rom. 11. 23. Isa. 25. 7.
w I Cor. 15. 45.
x Rom. 8 15.

if he turn from his wickedness which he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; but nevertheless, He is One who can by no means clear the guilty, when the final account is to be made. Thus He can give another opportunity, He can forgive iniquity, transgression and sin in the meantime; but at last one must be able to show a righteousness such as He requires, and this we cannot. Thus the opportunity so given only shows the more convincingly the desperate condition of man. It is just this gracious revelation of God manifesting all the grace of which law was capable, before which the people cannot stand, and which is a ministration of death, a writing of hopeless condemnation upon all.

This glory must, therefore, pass away. The glory on the face of Moses must give way to the glory in another Face, and the ministration of death to the ministration of the Spirit, who reveals Christ. Here the glory remains, for it is glory which the sinner, hopeless in himself, may see with gladness and satisfaction. There is gospel in it, as we shall learn directly, the gospel of the glory of Christ. So then the ministration of condemnation yet had glory, but how then does the ministration of righteousness abound in glory! Claim of righteousness the law made, but the ministration of righteousness was impossible by it. Righteousness is now *ministered* to us, not worked out by us, and thus indeed the glory of God is revealed as nothing else could reveal it. His inmost heart is told out in righteousness, but love in righteousness, and love how marvelous as shown in the gift of Christ for men! So that which was made glorious in the time past had in itself no glory compared with this surpassing glory. It would be sufficient to show this to realize that the one is the glory of that which is passed away, while the other glory remains and shall remain.

3. The ministers, then, of this new covenant can use great boldness; boldness indeed to pronounce the justification of the ungodly and to make sinners in Christ the righteousness of God! This is the boldness which grace has given us, and now there is to be nothing hidden, but the plainest speech and the fullest display of that which, while it glorifies God, is the complete blessing of man. In the dispensation of law, the children of Israel could not fix their eyes on the end of that which is now annulled. They could not see, alas, as disciples of law and going no further, the end of the law itself. The sweet grace of God, which indeed underlies everywhere its types and parables, was to them incapable of being realized. Their thoughts were darkened, and so, says the apostle, at this very day they are darkened. That veil remains unremoved from Moses' face, while yet in Christ it is done away. God has on His part done with it. They on their part have chosen it. It lies upon their heart, a heart which, taken up with its own self-righteousness, is turned away from the Lord. They must turn *to* the Lord to have the veil removed. This too shall be, in a time to which yet we look forward. The apostle now goes on to say that this Spirit,

DIVISION 3. (Chaps. iv., v.)

The radiancy of the glory in earthen vessels, making manifest its source.

1 (Iv. 1–6): The light shining.

1. THEREFORE, having this ministry, even as we have obtained mercy, we faint not. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in deceit, nor falsifying the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth [y]commending ourselves to every one's conscience before God. But if also our gospel be veiled, it is [z]veiled in those that are perishing; in whom the [a]god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that the [b]radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ, [c]who is the image of God, should not shine forth [for them]. For

[y] Jno. 8. 46.
[z] ch. 3. 15.
[a] Eph. 2.2.
[b] ch. 3. 18.
[c] Col. 1. 15. Heb. 1. 3.

who in the new covenant works out God's blessed will in men, is in fact the Lord. It is the energy of the Second Man, who, as the apostle says, "is a quickening Spirit." The Lord and the Spirit of the Lord are in this sense identified as the apostle identifies them here. "The Lord," he says, "is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Freedom has come in place of bondage, the joy of sonship instead of the old slavery. There is liberty of access to God so manifested, and it is in the revelation of His unveiled face that now we find the power which works in us, which makes us, in fact, that epistle of Christ of which the apostle has been so lately speaking. Here are the fingers of light that write God's new testimony upon souls. Looking now upon the glory of the Lord, a glory now unveiled, not hidden, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. How clear is the power of faith in this, how blessed the simplicity of it! We have only, as it were, to sit in the sun, to be bathed in its brightness. The power to enjoy Him is the power to reflect Him. The reflection is no effort, but the necessary effect of the enjoyment. While this goes on from one degree of glory to another, the least measure of it is glory, and, as more and more we know of Christ, glory superadded to glory. This is what is "by the Lord the Spirit." It is the life-giving Spirit of Christ, working in His energy in the souls of men, not only for individual blessing, but for that display also in the world of sinners which is true gospel witness.

Div. 3.

We carry these thoughts with us through the next division. We have here the radiancy of this glory, as the apostle has spoken of it, contrasted with the vessels of earth in which it is displayed. The earthen vessel may seem (in some sense may be) a hindrance, but in result God makes it only by this means manifest that the glory is not human glory, but divine. It is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

1. Here then is the ministry, in its character, which characterizes the new covenant. Those who have obtained mercy become of necessity the witnesses of that mercy. There are those, of course, who are specially called of God to bear public witness of it before men, but the testimony is of the same character in the humblest witness. The character of such a ministry lifts up and energizes the soul of one who is conscious of being entrusted with it. Walking in this light, the *hidden* things become "things of shame." The heart is without guile. There need be no self-deception, and no perversion of the word of God, no hiding its plainest statements, no seeking escape from its condemnation of men as such. The gospel is that of the glory of Christ. This is the true force of that which our common version has so much dimmed as making it simply "the glorious gospel." It is the glory of Christ now in heaven, His work achieved; and there,

we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus [as] Lord, and [d]ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Because it is the God who [e]spake that out of darkness light should shine, who hath shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[d] 1 Cor. 9. 19.
[e] Gen. 1. 3.

2 (7-12): Delivered unto death that life may witness.

2. But we have this treasure [f]in earthen vessels, [g]that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not of us; every way afflicted, but not straitened; perplexed, but not unto despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about [h]in the body the dying of Jesus, that the

[f] *cf.* Lev. 14. 5. Ju. 7. 16.
[g] ch. 12. 7-10.
[h] Gal. 6. 17.

therefore, as the representative of His people. If upon the cross He was their representative and bore the sin which lay upon them, that is removed, the burden of it is gone forever; all the wonder of the grace and power which have come in for us shines out in His face who is gone to God. Thus *His* glory is indeed gospel. This glorious Christ is He in whom the image of God, invisible otherwise, shines fully out. It is its own witness to those who realize their need and who find it thus met and abounded over. If it is veiled, it is veiled simply by the power of the god of this age in the minds of the unbelieving. It is not simply that Satan obscures it to them, but that it is their own unbelief which brings them under the power of Satan, and so hinders the radiance of the gospel shining forth to them. God never permits Satan to have this power apart from man's consent that it should be so. If men turn away from God, they turn to Satan. The very light of God only darkens, as one may say, the shadow which they themselves cast upon their path.

Solemn word it is that with the full consciousness of Christianity come, and its power for working in the souls of men, the apostle should call Satan not simply, as elsewhere, the prince of this world, but "the god of this *age*." Christianity has not introduced, in this respect, a new age. It gathers men out of the world. It will never affect the world itself so as to bring in a new age for men. This, of course, lies in no inherent incapacity of the gospel itself, but in the strange mystery of man's free will, by which he chooses darkness rather than light, and bondage to Satan rather than the freedom which God proclaims to him. But the age, one ought distinctly to understand, is not as yet an age of light, and the world will never be converted by the gospel, so that this shall be. Christ must come to effect this. The sun which has gone down upon the world in Christ's banishment out of it through man's unbelief, must rise again, as it will rise, and then indeed there will be a kingdom of Christ in which righteousness shall reign, and peace and blessing be the result of righteousness.

In this blessed light, then, drinking it in, it would be impossible for those in character as the preachers of it, to proclaim themselves. In the knowledge of the new man "Christ is all and in all." Christ is Lord, and the ministers of the gospel are but the servants of men for Jesus' sake. It is a glad and willing subjection in love to the need which is everywhere, and this power cannot be lacking for ministry to that need. The story of the old creation is repeated more wonderfully in the new. The God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine has shone in our hearts, in order that this knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine forth to others. This is the radiancy of the glory in the face of Jesus Christ reflected from the hearts into which it has shone.

2. Here, then, is a treasure which God has designedly placed in earthen vessels for the definite purpose that the exceeding greatness of the power may be seen to be of God and not of man. The earthen vessel might seem to be an obstruction to the light which the treasure is. In some sense also it may assuredly

life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we who live are alway [i]delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, [j]that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death worketh in us, but life in you.

[i] 1 Cor. 4. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 30, 31.
[j] 1 Thess. 1. 5.

3 (13-18): The power of resurrection and glory.

3. And having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, [k]I have believed, therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore we speak; knowing that he [l]who raised up the Lord Jesus shall

[k] Ps. 116. 10.
[l] *cf.* Eph. 1. 19, 20. 1 Thess. 4. 14.

be this. The vessel itself may need to be broken in order that the light may shine. There seems indeed an evident reference to Gideon's men and the breaking of the vessels on their part that the lights they carried might be displayed. It is evident that God has chosen men for His messengers to men, and not angels. Angelic ministry might seem in some sense to be more fit, that it would have more power in it as evidently from heaven, and would not be liable to be corrupted by the tendency to failure, inseparable from man, even renewed man. But God is wiser than we, and the grace in which He makes men His ministers and messengers to men cannot be doubted. There is also a character of testimony to which the apostle refers here, which even angelic ministry could not afford. That would be a testimony in power, but not in weakness, and not manifesting that peculiar power which weakness itself alone can manifest, a power which is not its own, but of the grace which comes ever to lift up, animate and nerve to endurance in all our weakness. It is to this that the apostle goes on here. "We are every way afflicted," he says, "but not straitened." There is the effect of grace in the midst of the affliction. "We are perplexed, but not unto despair." Exercise is allowed, nay, given full room for, but the soul sustained in its confidence in God so that despair is impossible. "Persecuted, but not forsaken, smitten down, yet not destroyed." How the dying Stephen seems to be in the apostle's mind, with the light in his face, while the body was dropping into the martyr's grave! "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," not exactly His death, but His dying, Himself also a Martyr, the great Martyr,—and that is the point here. Bearing it about in the body is suffering at the hands of men to some extent as He suffered, but with the effect that the life of Jesus may be manifested in the body. God, he insists, has designed this,—has delivered the living up to death for Jesus' sake, but that the life of Jesus may thus be manifested even in mortal flesh. The final result, therefore, is "death worketh in us, but life in you." The badge of the cross is to be borne by the disciples of it. That is God's way of working, and it is the cross in this sense also which is to win men to God.

3. He dwells now more upon the power which sustains us under these circumstances. It is the power of *faith*,—a faith which, because it is such, must utter itself. We believe, and therefore speak. It is what the history of all time assures us of, and therefore he goes back here for a quotation, to the Old Testament; but we have that which Old Testament believers had not. We know God as the God of resurrection, in a sense in which yet they could not know Him. He has raised up the Lord Jesus, and we are so identified with Him that this perfectly assures us of what is before us also, that "He shall raise up us also with Jesus, and present us with you." The resurrection of Christ insures, as the apostle has told us before, the resurrection of His people. If we do not rise, then it must be that He has not risen. If He has risen, He has risen as the first-fruits of those that slept. In all this the same principle which he has spoken of at the beginning of the epistle still obtains. The grace that works in some, works for the sake of all. The power manifested in some is to give energy to all, and "all things," he says, "are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God." God is still taking up Jacobs for His Israel, and out of weakness mani-

raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. For [m]all things are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Wherefore we faint not; but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the [n]inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, [o]worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; [p]while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

4 (v. 1-8): Our present experience.

4. For we know that if our earthly house of the [q]tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this indeed we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is [r]of heaven: if so be

[m] *cf.* ch. 1. 6. ch. 9. 12.

[n] Rom. 7. 22.

[o] 1 Pet. 1. 7.

[p] Rom. 8. 24, 25.

[q] ch. 4. 7. 2 Pet. 1. 14.

[r] 1 Cor. 15. 49.

festing His strength; and if it be this, it is unfailing strength, so that the weakness can be no discouragement. What a testimony to the power of God when, whatever be the trial, His people faint not, but "if" indeed "the outward man be consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day." It needs to be renewed. We are conscious of the wear and tear of things as we go through them. God makes us sensible of our dependence, sensible thus of the arms that carry us. We are learning lessons here which in eternity shall display all their fruit for us; but the present result is that the affliction is but a light one, an affliction for the moment, and "which worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The apostle labors, as it were, for expressions here. The words "weight" and "glory" would be in Hebrew the same word; a glory, as the thought is, which to us as we look at it now is almost oppressive by its intensity. It would overwhelm us in our present condition, although as we carry it presently there will be no weight, but a lifting up forever. Faith here is continually a need. Hope must be not upon the things that are seen, but upon the things that are unseen. The things that are seen, with all the power that we realize they may have for us, are for a time only. The things that are not seen are the realities. They are eternal.

4. He goes on to show us how entirely for faith the things that are against us have been made our own, and the consequences of sin for man at large have been removed for us. Death is abolished. Judgment is behind us in the cross, though there remains, it is true, the giving account before the judgment-seat of Christ,—an immense blessing for us, and in which the power of God's grace will have its complete triumph.

First, as to death. "We know," says the apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He is speaking of the body, of course, as the "house of this tabernacle." It is that which is to be dissolved, and there remains for us, for eternity, a building of God, a house not made with hands. He is thinking, of course, not of the Father's house, but of what contrasts with and replaces the present habitation. "In this we groan," not for the mere infirmities surely from which we suffer here, but more with the sense of the impediment to the spirit which the body in its present form implies. "We long to be clothed with our habitation which is of heaven," that is, which belongs to heaven; not which is formed of heavenly material, so to speak, or which comes down from it, but which has its character derived from it. It is heavenly as suited to heaven, and to the perfect condition which will be ours then. In the present tabernacle we groan as burdened, not indeed to be unclothed, not as seeking death, but rather that which will swallow up death itself,—to be

that being clothed, we shall not be found [s]naked. For indeed we who are in the tabernacle [t]groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that the [u]mortal might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who hath given us the [v]earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, being always confident, and knowing that, while at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight), we are confident, and well pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be [w]at home with the Lord.

5 (9-12): The account at the judgment-seat.

5. Wherefore also we are ambitious, whether present

[s] Gen. 3. 10. [t] Rom. 8.23. [u] Rom.8.11. [v] Eph. 1.14. Rom. 8. 11. [w] Phil.1.23.

"clothed upon, that all that is mortal might be swallowed up of life." The apostle is evidently thinking here of the living when the Lord comes. It is not that that which is *corruptible*, but that which is *mortal*, may be swallowed up of life. The mortal condition is the present one, and what he would desire is not death for its own sake, but the joy of the full perfection which remains for us.

He interjects here a word which seems to be a warning for the conscience amongst a people of some of whom he stood in doubt. "If so be," he says, "that being clothed upon we shall not be found naked." That is, of course, what awaits every Christian. To lose the place in resurrection, the glorious and incorruptible body which will thus be ours, is impossible for any real Christian. It would be real nakedness, although the wicked will rise, as well as the righteous; but it will be no *covering*, the body with which they rise. There is a glance back, evidently, at man's condition after the fall when he fled among the trees of the garden from the penetrating Eyes from which, after all, there was no escape. In eternity there will be no escape. Those who are found naked then, will be in all the terror that belongs to such a condition under the eye of God. Think of the exposure! But it is plainly that which no Christian can suffer from. The resurrection is the accomplishment of that for which God laid hold upon us, and of which He has given us the pledge already, the earnest of the Spirit. "God will quicken our mortal bodies," the apostle has told us in Romans, "because of His Spirit which He has given us." It is in the body that the Spirit dwells at the present time, and He certainly will never give up that which in this way has become the temple of God. This gives, then, continual confidence. We are at home in the body, true. It is the only state with which we are familiar now, but faith realizes that the Lord is absent, and that we are absent, therefore, from Him. It is by faith we walk, and not by sight. But thus to be absent from the body is for us as Christians to be at home with the Lord. Thus is death, then, abolished for us.

5. But there is another thing that lies upon man as man, and which is the terror of death to him. "After death," says the apostle, "the judgment." But the Lord has Himself told us that he that liveth and believeth on Him shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. If He has broken the power of death for us now, so that he that liveth and believeth in Him shall in that sense never die, so has He, and indeed in order to this, taken away the terror of judgment, which for the believer personally Christ has endured and removed. The confusion which is in the minds of Christians so much has nothing to justify it in Scripture, and is largely due, as is plain, to the forgetfulness of the coming of Christ for His own, which removes them in one company, distinct from the world, before judgment falls upon the world. They are not picked out by judgment from the world. They are separated by the coming of the Lord to gather His own to Himself. No one of those caught up can possibly doubt whose he is or what is before him. He is raised in glory or changed into it. He is in the very likeness of Him he goes to meet, and although he is to be manifested before the

or absent, to be well pleasing to him; for we must all be manifested before the [x]judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, [y]whether good or worthless. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope also that we are made [z]manifest in your consciences. [For]* we do not again commend ourselves

x Rom. 14. 10.

y *cf.* Eccl. 12. 14. 1 Cor. 3.14, 15.

z ch. 4. 2.

* Some omit.

judgment-seat of Christ, there can be no possible terror for him in such a thought, when at last every touch of evil has disappeared. He is in the perfect likeness of the Lord Himself.

But we are to be "manifested." That is the force of the word, not merely "we shall appear," but "we shall be manifested." That is the blessing of it. Our ways and works will perfectly show what we are and what we have been, and to the glory of Him who has, spite of all our failure, accomplished at last the blessed purpose of grace towards us, so that we can be with Him, and, as it were, judge with Him our whole condition. What a lack there would be if there were not this great clearing up of things before we have passed fully into eternity,—if the wisdom and grace and holiness of God were not perfectly displayed thus in all His ways with us, if we had not the lessons of time impressed upon us for the wisdom of eternity! There will be no failure of memory then, but the keenest possible appreciation of everything. Would we forget what we have been, so as to forget along with it the grace which has been with us? Would we lose materials for the song of praise which will be ours forever? Many seem to forget the value of all this to us as the day will declare it and the glory of God which will be manifested,—the perfect fulfilment of the Lord's words as to His people: "I am glorified in them." The principle is plain, as the Old Testament expresses it, that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Nothing else would be worthy of Him. He has nothing to hide, and no act of His has really been in vain, however much in our folly, as we look at things now, we might imagine so. He is to be found justified in this last judgment of all, and we too, for we are to receive also "the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or worthless." Everything is to be appraised and estimated at its right value, but this, as it is said elsewhere, that "every one may have his praise from God."

God is seeking good and not evil. He is still, as He does ever, taking the precious from the vile, because He loves the precious. It may be needful in this way that the vile should be looked at also, but it will only enhance the preciousness of the precious. That which is worthless will of course be judged as worthless. It will not be gain. But even here the estimation of it as such will have its gain. The continuity of the future with the present existence is strangely often lost sight of. People often look at it as if the entrance into eternity were to be the entire break with the past; whereas this cannot be without proclaiming at the same time the want of eternal meaning in things here.

The principle, of course, applies also to the judgment of the wicked, and this the apostle turns to now as necessarily being brought before him with all the terror of it, when he turns to persuade men. For himself there can be no terror, but there is most solemn apprehension of what such a searching out as there will be in the day of judgment will be for men. It will still be for the things done in the body that they will give account,—a merciful limitation of it. There is no hint of what people have so strangely added to it, of sin going on even after death, and in hell itself increasing for eternity the weight of condemnation. The time of responsibility is the present time. Eternity for the wicked will be

to you, but give you occasion to glory in our behalf, that ye may have [wherewith to answer] those who glory in appearance and not in heart.

6 (13–16): The cross as the end of the flesh.

6. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we are sober, it is for you. For the love of Christ constraineth us, judging this: that one died for

the time for receiving the things done in the body, and thus God's mercy will limit retribution, while God's holiness will not suffer the continuance of sin, as people imagine; apart surely, from one sentence in Scripture to justify it. Hell is the prisonhouse of the condemned, not a place of manifested rebellion against God any more, or of the evil works for which the condemned are shut up there. It is mercy itself that limits all this.

It is not indeed that judgment will make any essential change in men. It will not turn the sinner into a righteous person. It will not change the heart; but nevertheless it will subdue entirely men to God. God has ordained that to Christ "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord," and that of "beings infernal" as of all the rest. This enforced subjection is, in fact, the only mercy of which they are capable; but the lake of fire itself will have no odor of corruption in it. God will be God everywhere, in hell as in heaven, however differently He will be manifested in each place.

But what a joy to the apostle the present manifestation to God, to which this brings him! We are *already* made manifest to God. We are living and walking in the presence of Him who is light, and can rejoice to be searched out by Him who loves us and has given Christ for us. The power of this upon his life the apostle hopes with confidence will bear witness to the consciences of those whom he addresses. He does not need to commend himself to them, but they have the opportunity, if they would, to glory with regard to such, in opposition to those who were showing themselves among the Corinthians, and glorying indeed in appearance, aiming to be somewhat, while the heart lacked.

6. He is plainly now thinking, for the moment, of the opposers in Corinth who could readily find occasion to criticise the ways of one so different from themselves. On the one hand he declares that it was to God he lived; on the other hand, for the sake, therefore, of men whom God loved, and to whom He had sent the message of love by him. To some he might seem indeed beside himself, just for the glow of wondrous happiness when occupied directly with God Himself, but there was plenty amongst those with whom he had to do to make him sober enough with a sobriety which had reference to them, the token of the earnestness of his heart towards them for their blessing. In all, it was the love of Christ constraining him. This was the one constraint in which there was perfect freedom. He turns to that work of the cross, to him so necessary, and which had for him the perfect revelation of the need of man, as well as the perfect provision on God's part which had been made for it. He had died for all. That was grace, but it was the perfect manifestation also of man's need. Where has sin been judged as in the cross? Where has the condition of man been manifested as it has in that fact that the love that would save men must go down to the awful depths of judgment to do so? "If one died for all, then all have died." It is not exactly, as in the common version, "all were dead." The death that Christ died was not the death in which He found men; but it is the effect of the cross of which he is speaking; it is the perfect condemnation of man, of all men, and on the part of a Saviour, not of a mere judge,—of One who desired for them eternal blessing, but who, if He accomplished this, must meet that death which was upon all. Thus, if He died for all, all died as it were, for the soul that estimated it rightly, in that cross itself. It was the end of all hope for men, apart from Christ. Nothing could be looked for from them merely, and the words are evidently to be taken in their double relation, to the cross as condemnation and to the cross as salvation.

all, [a]so then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live may no longer live unto themselves, but [b]unto him who died for them and was raised up. So that henceforth we [c]know no one after the flesh; and if we have known [d]Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him [thus] no more.

7 (17-21): In Christ, perfection and a perfect ground of reconciliation.

7. So that if any one be [e]in Christ, it is a new creation; the [f]old things have passed; behold, [all]* things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath [g]reconciled us to himself through Christ, and hath given

a cf. Rom. 8. 3.
b Gal. 2. 20. Phil. 1. 20, 21.
c Col. 3. 1, 11.
d Rom. 1. 3. Rom. 9. 5.
e Eph. 2. 10. Gal. 6. 15.
f Eph. 2. 15. Eph. 4. 24.
g Rom. 5. 10 Col. 1. 21.

* Some of the earliest MSS. omit "all."

He died indeed for all, in the desire of God, for the salvation of all. It does not and could not say that He made atonement for all, except so far as that He made life possible for all, and thus the word of the gospel could go out to all. There was no lack on God's part for any who should seek His grace; and for those actually saved by it the cross has wrought in another way by its complete deliverance from the guilt and judgment of sin. It has wrought deliverance from the power of sin itself, so that those who now live by virtue of it live a new spiritual life in the sense of the grace that has visited them, living "no more unto themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again." This is the only complete enfranchisement and deliverance from all necessity for living to one's self any more, even religiously,—divine grace securing all our interests in the most perfect way, that now His interests may be our interests, that we may live to Him.

There is another change. The cross has ended for the Christian the whole history of man in the flesh, and thus removed him, as it were, out of sight. "Nay," he even says, "if we have known *Christ* after the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more." This does not of course mean, cannot mean by any possibility, that the record of His blessed life on earth has not its full meaning for us. On the contrary, it is from the Christ who lived before our eyes and the Christ who died for us, that we know now the living Christ. We could not follow Him, as it were, into heaven, except as those who have known Him upon earth. That will constitute for all eternity a source of knowledge which can never be dried up. Nevertheless, Christ has passed out of it all. He is in another condition, and the living Christ we know is One who belongs to a new creation, to which also, through grace, and through His work, His people belong.

We know Him in the place to which He has ascended, and there is no other Christ to be known than this, and this affects all our apprehension of the condition of men here, and all our ways with them. How can we ever forget what the cross has manifested as to men in nature, and where alone true blessing is to be found for them? That is what marked the apostle in the entire earnestness that belonged to him. He did not look at men as men with their social and political distinctions, and what not. What were all these in the presence of the cross and the glory?

7. So that now, "If any one be in Christ, it is a new creation. The old things have passed. Behold, all things are become new." How simple and evident the result! We are the fruit of a new work of the Creator, which has brought us into new relationships, into a place which is eternal, a scene into which sin can no more enter, a paradise never to be blighted as the old one was. The apostle is not speaking here of our own condition as we know it by experience. He does not mean that there is no sin remaining in us, that we have got into any perfected condition which can set us beyond the need of self-judgment, beyond the need of discipline and correction. He is speaking entirely of what we are in Christ, something which faith knows and realizes, which we judge not by

us the ministry of reconciliation: how that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, [h] not imputing to them their trespasses; and committing to us the word of reconciliation. We are [i] ambassadors, therefore, for Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin, he hath [j] made sin for us, that we might become the [k] righteousness of God in him.

[h] Rom. 4.6-8.
[i] Eph. 6. 20.
[j] Rom. 8. 3.
[k] Rom. 3.25, 26.

experience, but by the revelation of the Word itself. Alas, Christians as we are, it is not impossible that the full reality of this may decline for us in its power over our souls. All the same it remains true that there is no one in Christ who is not a subject of this new creation, who does not belong to the scene where all things are new, and where all things are of God.

Thus has He reconciled us to Himself, through Christ. He has brought us out of all the estrangement natural to us. There is no distance; there is nearness. There is no separation of our things from His. They are, so to speak, identical; and thus not the apostle alone could say, nor any class among Christians merely, that "He hath given us the ministry of reconciliation." By the very fact that He has brought us to Himself and made Himself known to us, He has given us the power also of making known to others that with which our own souls are filled and of bringing others to Him. We have received the reconciliation; and what we have received, we have received not for ourselves alone, but to minister with it. It is the work which Christ Himself began upon earth when God in Him assumed the attitude of perfect grace, not imputing men's trespasses to them, reconciling, therefore, the world to Himself. It is not a question of how far this might be effectual, of how far men, in fact, responded to it. It was His attitude. It was on God's part complete, and now, with that work accomplished which he speaks of directly as the basis of it all, and which always must have been the basis of it, a work foreseen by God before it was accomplished, but which is now accomplished, He is still reconciling men, but through others, who stand instead of Christ here, His authenticated ambassadors, by whom God beseeches men still. "We pray," says the apostle, "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." That is, Christ is not here Himself to do this, but He has multiplied the hands which are to minister it. He has on every side the witnesses that are to speak for Him. The apostle and those with him, sent in the first place direct from Christ, fulfilled this character, of course, in the most complete and authoritative way, but we must not on that account overlook our own part in it,—a part which every Christian has. It is not, indeed, a mere question of something entrusted to us, but of hearts that know God's grace and know men's need of it, which must necessarily, therefore, speak of what they know. As we have already seen, he who believes speaks. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

And here is the basis of this reconciliation still:—"Him who knew no sin, He has made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Wonderful words are these, deeper no doubt than we can altogether fathom! It may be that "sin for us" should be thought of as "sin-offering." The word in both Greek and Hebrew is identical, but this does not really alter the truth of what is here. The fact is that the sin-offering was presented to God of old as the "sin" of the one who presented it. He who presented it to God at this time was One who had none of His own, who emphatically knew no sin. He could not otherwise have presented it; for it was an offering of Himself, and that must be a spotless offering to be accepted. But He stood, therefore, before God as identified with the sin of others which He had taken upon Himself, endured the judgment of that, and thus the message of reconciliation can go out to all.

But there is more than this here. Those who receive it become the righteous-

DIVISION 4. (Chaps. vi.–vii.)

Testing and trial in the world through which we pass.

1 (vi. 1-13): Sufficiency of a ministry of God under every test.

1. NOW as fellow-workmen, we also beseech that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; for he saith, [l]I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation I have succored thee; behold [m]now is the well accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. [n]Giving no manner of offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed; but in everything [o]commending ourselves as ministers of God, [p]in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in straits, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in pureness, in knowledge, in

l Isa. 49. 8.
m Lu. 4. 19.
n 1 Cor. 9. 12.
o cf. 1 Thess. 1. 5.
p ch. 11. 24, etc.

ness of God, as before God in Him who has stood for them. It is not simply that God's righteousness now can act in grace in their behalf. That is of course the doctrine of Romans, which we have had before us. This is the effect of it, however. If the righteousness of God justifies us as those identified with Christ, and in the value, therefore, of His work for them, we in receiving the value of that work become the exhibition of that righteousness which has in this way acted. We become identified with it. He could appeal to the righteous Father when He quitted the world, on His own behalf, as One who had known Him, and puts along with Himself those who have known that God sent Him. The Spirit come down into the world is thus the witness of righteousness in which God has acted in His behalf in taking Him to Himself. He is the witness, as in us also, of the perfection which is ours in Him, and of the display of righteousness on God's part towards Him in the fruit of His work. Thus we become and shall ever be the righteousness of God in Christ. How far beyond the thought of mere forgiveness is this! How blessed to realize the claim that we have thus upon Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus our God and Father! Here is indeed the basis of a reconciliation which we can now beseech men to accept, and which is in itself the fullest, brightest display of God that can ever be. Can there be another revelation of God which can exceed the glory with which He has been glorified in His beloved Son?

Div. 4.

We have now, as always in these fourth divisions, the testing by the way; in which, if on the one hand our weakness is proved, the power of God for us is no less manifested, and the grace of God also in its support all through and in the development of the fruits of righteousness. The suffering and trial, it is manifest, give just the opportunity for this. If there were no difficulties there would be nothing to triumph over. If there were no testing, there would be no manifestation of the reality of God's work in His people. There would be no accomplishment either of that which is wrought by the necessary discipline in it all. The things that seem against us are thus really for us, according to the abiding assurance that God maketh all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

1. We have still, as all through here, the apostle himself the witness of the trial and in the trial. It is really that he is an example, by way of eminence, of that which still applies to all the people of God. Otherwise, the example would be no example. There would be nothing for us, at least, except a mere ability given to admire in another what would have no meaning for one's self. The life of the apostle, indeed, in all its suffering, may seem very little suited as an example for us in the days that we are fallen upon, days which are none the better indeed for this, and which give the trial in many respects another

long-suffering, in kindness, [q]in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the [r]power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and true; as unknown, and well known; as [s]dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not put to death; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and [t]possessing all things. O Corinthians, our mouth is opened to you, our heart is expanded. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now, by way of recompense in the same kind, (I speak as unto children) be ye also expanded.

2 (vi.14-vii. 1): Separation from evil a necessity for fellowship with God.

2. [u]Be not united in a strange yoke with unbelievers, for what participation is there between righteousness

q 1 Thess.1. 5.
r ch. 10. 4.
s ch. 4. 16.
t 1 Cor. 3.21, 22.
u Deut. 7. 3. Jn 3. 5, 6. Deut. 22.9–11. 2 Chron.19. 2. 1 Cor. 5. 11. 2 Tim.2.19, 21.

character. Still the principles remain all the way through, and God's way is to give us principles, the application of which appeals to us for the needed faithfulness to carry out. Joining his fellow workers with himself, the apostle beseeches that the grace of God exhibited in his message may not be received in vain; for indeed now was the time accepted of which God before had spoken, for He had said: "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation I have succored thee." Now is the time characterized pre-eminently in this way. Its character as a whole, not exceptionally or occasionally, is that of a well accepted time, a day of salvation.

Beseeching them thus, he can appeal to that which was manifestly a character of his own testimony, giving no manner of offence in anything, causing none to stumble and the ministry so to be blamed, "but in everything commending ourselves as the ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in labors, in watchings, in fastings." These were the circumstances suited for the development of such a character as he goes on to speak of: "In pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God." It is evidently a world just suited to display these things in, as darkness is suited for the stars to shine in it. With reference to the opposition also: "By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report"; "as deceivers" in the evil report, and "true" in reality; "as unknown," on the one side, and "well known" on the other; "as dying" in the life here, with regard to all the things that in men's thoughts constitute life, "yet living" in the life which alone is true and eternal; then "as chastened and not put to death; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and possessing all things." What contradictions and anomalies here are nevertheless made all to work harmoniously for the manifestation of Christ and His people! And this was so evident as to the apostle that there was no need indeed to enlarge upon such things. They knew that the staple of his life was found in them. He could therefore appeal confidently in the fulness of the love which he had to them, and in which now through grace he could count upon them. His mouth was open to them, his heart enlarged. Indeed, it had never been in himself that they were straitened, but in those affections really in which, speaking in love as unto his children, he could ask them by way of recompense now to be enlarged.

2. This, then, was the picture of a life so different from that which the Corinthians plainly had been seeking for themselves, in which alliance with the world had been substituted for persecution by the world, and the beginning is manifest of that which the centuries since have developed in so terrible a way. He urges them, therefore, here that they "be not united in a foreign yoke with

and lawlessness, or what fellowship hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial,* or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, and what agreement hath the temple† of God with idols; for ye are *v* the temple† of the living God, as God hath said, *w* I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore, *x* come out from among them and be separated, saith [the]‡ Lord, and touch not what is unclean, and I will receive you, and I will be *y* to you a Father,§ and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith [the]‡ Lord Almighty. Having, therefore, these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

v 1 Cor. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 6. 19.
w Lev. 26. 12. Ex. 25. 8.
x Isa. 52. 11.
y *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 8, 14.

* Greek, "Beliar." † *Ναός*, the sanctuary itself.
‡ The omission of the article in the Greek, marks "the Lord" as standing for "Jehovah."
§ The reference to 2 Sam. vii. is of the freest character, and applies the principle simply: God's ways are the result of His nature which abides the same; so therefore do His ways.

unbelievers." For those who believed in a crucified Christ, for whom the measure of things was seen in the cross, how was it possible that there should be now the ability to go on together in common effort for a common end? What participation could there be between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship had light with darkness? Or what concord between Christ and Belial? What portion could there be for a believer to enjoy with an unbeliever; and that temple of God which he had before reminded them that they were, how could it go on in association with idolatry? Christians are the temple of the living God, the fulfilment of those words: "I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people." Where God dwells, He must be God. Where God walks, those who walk must be in harmony with Him. Association with the world is thus the ruin of Christianity. Christ and the world are fundamental opposites, and we cannot, as the Lord said long before, serve two masters after this manner. The apostle appeals to them, therefore, to come out from them and be separate, (not he alone had said this, but the Lord,) and not to touch the unclean thing; and only upon such conditions could He practically be to them that which in grace He had declared Himself. He *was* their Father, but they forfeited, in the meanwhile, their claim to the enjoyment of such a relationship, unless they were in a condition in which He could display His love without compromise of His holiness. Thus alone could the Lord, the Almighty, have them with Him as sons and daughters.

How the accumulation of these divine titles here is witness of the terrible loss which they could put up with so easily! Do not the same principles obtain for us to-day? Are not the same conditions imperative, conditions which depend upon the nature of God Himself, impossible to change? Are not our associations, therefore, a matter of first consequence for us to consider? How little, however, is such association regarded now! Christians go with those most unchristian, whenever, as they think, they have common ends and purposes; which, in fact, they never can have without giving up that which is the whole matter before God—the heart exhibited in these. Communion without separation is here declared to us to be an impossible thing; and how clearly is manifested here the drift of things, even among Christians, in a day like this, when large liberality is supposed to be what is pre-eminently Christian, and the love that thinketh no evil is confounded with the blindness which sees none where it manifestly exists. God's word abides for us to-day, and the world

3 (vii. 2-16): Realization of the work of the Spirit accomplished in them.

3. Receive us: we have injured no man, we have corrupted no man, we have made gain of no man. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together. Great is my boldness toward you, great is my glorying with regard to you; I am filled with encouragement; I am made to abound exceedingly in joy in all our tribulation. For even when we were [z] come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way; without [were] fightings, within fears; but God, who encourageth those that are brought low, encouraged us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the encouragement wherewith he was encouraged as to you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal toward me, so that I rejoiced the more. For if also I grieved you by the letter, I do not regret, even though I did regret [it]; for I perceive that that letter grieved you, though it were but for a season. But now I rejoice, not that ye have been grieved, but that ye have been

[z] ch. 2. 13.

abides also still in its essential character the same, the busy, self-seeking world that knows not the cross; save, perhaps, as an ornament on the outside. Here then are the promises which are made by God Himself, and which are certain of fulfilment, and as certain in the necessity of the conditions which they imply. "Let us cleanse ourselves, therefore, from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

3. The apostle pours out to them now once more all his heart towards them. He could appeal to them in the consciousness of his blamelessness, in which they would bear him witness. He had injured none. He had corrupted no one. He had made personal gain of none. It was not to condemn them that he spoke thus, for they were in his heart to die and live with them. It is remarkable and noteworthy that he puts the dying first, before the living; but he had now, not only great boldness towards them, but even great glorying with regard to them. He is as ready, and much more ready, to speak to their praise, than in rebuke; however necessary at times this might be. Now he was as full of the joy as he had been of the sorrow; a joy which the tribulation through which he had passed in no wise weakened. He had been in exceeding distress he repeats, as if he could not too earnestly insist upon it. In Macedonia his flesh had had no rest,—fightings without and fears within, but God, who encourageth those who are brought low, had encouraged him by the coming of Titus; and not by his mere coming, but by the encouragement which he had himself received amongst them. So that if he had grieved them by the letter formerly written, he could not now regret it, though for the moment he had regretted,—a remarkable instance of how little the inspiration of the inspired writer was always that of which in himself he was conscious! Here was a letter which we all recognize as an inspired letter, and yet in a moment of weakness he had regretted writing it. It shows how our affections may indeed for a time overpower our reason, and even our spiritual judgment! That grief on the part of the Corinthians,—though but for a season, and which now so evidently had worked blessing for them,—how strange, yet in some sense comforting, these exercises of the apostle as to it! But now it was abundantly manifest how God had been in it, and worked by it for blessing. They had been indeed grieved to repentance and made sorry after a godly manner, only so that in nothing there might be injury from his course with regard to them. This godly sorrow worked repentance to salvation never to be regretted. He is speaking, of course, of the salvation which, as we see in

grieved to repentance, for ye have been made sorry after a godly manner, that in nothing ye might be injured by us. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation never to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what diligence it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea what fear, yea what earnest desire, yea what zeal, yea what vengeance! In every way ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, it was not for the sake of him that did the wrong, nor for the sake of him that suffered wrong, but for the sake of our diligent zeal for you in the sight of God being manifested to you. Therefore, we have been comforted, and we the rather rejoiced in our encouragement more abundantly by reason of the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I have not been made ashamed; but as we have spoken to you all things in truth, so also our boasting to Titus became truth; and his inward affections* are more abundant towards you when he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice that I have confidence in you in all things.

* Greek, "bowels."

Philippians, we have to work out for ourselves, although God works in it in His grace towards us. He is speaking of deliverance from the difficulties of the way, and this, mere sorrow of the world never did work out, but rather death. He bids them look at the effects. If they had sorrowed after a godly sort, what diligence it had wrought in them; what earnest desire to clear themselves of all that could be charged; "what indignation" in view of sin; "what fear" as they realized the weakness that had been so manifest; what "earnest desire" now for a better testimony, and "what zeal" for God, yea, even "what vengeance" upon all that opposed itself to Him! Thus they had approved themselves every way to be clear as to this matter. And what he had written to them was not for the sake of individuals merely, but that they might realize the diligent zeal which was in his heart for them in the sight of God. He was now comforted by the refreshment which Titus had received from them, and the confirmation of what he had boasted about them to him. It was now evident that spite of what had come in, yet he had spoken, in fact, the truth with regard to them. They had sustained the character which he had given them in the obedience now manifested to the word by him, and in the fear and trembling with which they had received his messenger. Confidence as to the mass of them was fully restored.

Div. 5.

We have now come to a form of ministry which it is evident the apostle makes much of, and which, perhaps, is in little danger of being thought little of at any time. As we see in the body of Christ itself, the fitting together of the whole by that which every part supplieth,—the need of one being met by the ability that is in another,—so in the world itself, not in its evil shape, but as God has ordained things amongst men, we see the same fitting together, the dependence of one upon another, the need intended, as is evident, to draw out the

DIVISION 5. (Chaps. viii., ix.)

The communication to the need of others on the part of those who have ability to supply the need.

1 (viii. 1-7): Themselves first.

1. MOREOVER, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the assemblies of Macedonia; that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their [a]deep poverty abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty [to give effect to] the grace and fellowship of the service to the saints. And not according as we hoped, but they gave their own selves first to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. So that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would complete also as to you this grace also. Now as ye [b]abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and all diligence, and in your love to us, [see] that ye abound in this grace also.

[a] Mk. 12.44.

[b] 1 Cor. 1.5.

heart in men towards one another, and to make conscious the weakness which is after all a weakness manifest in all in different ways and measures. Here is, I suppose, what makes the suitability also of this subject forming a fifth division of the epistle, the number 5 speaking, as has often been said, of the weak with the strong, primarily of the creature with God, but which may thus have, and surely has, its application in a lower sphere. The ministry of power of whatever kind to weakness, is essentially that all through here; and, as we have seen already in the sermon on the mount, the Lord makes even almsgiving an example of what is simply righteousness on the part of those who realize their own need of the ministry which thus goes out to others.

1. All this is a matter in which, alas, the heart is so often separated from the hand, and the easy liberality of the rich may so assume an appearance of goodness beyond that which can really be sustained before God, that we have need of care in handling it. The Lord has shown us how the largeness of the gift is in no wise the test of what is good in God's sight, and how the two mites of a poor widow, making one farthing, can be more to Him than all the treasures piled up by the wealthy. In fact, those of whom the apostle speaks here were manifesting in their deep poverty the riches of their free-hearted liberality. This is what makes liberality noteworthy. It is not so much what is given as what remains to the giver. What the apostle valued, as there is no possibility of questioning, was not the largeness of the gift, but the heart displayed in it. The collection of which he is speaking here was for the poor Jews at Jerusalem, a witness of the appreciation on the part of the Gentiles of the blessing which God had ministered to them through the Jews. It was righteousness on their part to own this; and the spiritual blessing which they had received was far beyond anything that could be compensated pecuniarily, however much it might be acknowledged. It was the manner of the giving here which rejoiced the heart of the apostle. The saints did not give to release themselves, as it were, from a certain obligation to the Lord, but they had given themselves first to Him, and this made it a simple matter to give all the rest. Thus the material ministry became spiritual; and this is why the apostle rejoiced in it. It was an evidence of love and devotedness, and thus he could exhort the Corinthians to follow the example which the assemblies of Macedonia had set them; and, as they

2 (8-15): The Great Example; and the object of the ministry.

2. I speak not by commandment, but through the zeal of others, and to prove also the genuineness of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that [c]when he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich. And herein I [d]give my opinion, for this is profitable for you who have begun before [them], not only to do but also to will, [e]a year ago. Now, therefore, complete the doing of it; so that as there was the readiness to will, there may be to complete [it] out of what ye have. For if there be a ready mind, [a man is] accepted according to what he may have, not according to what he hath not. For [I mean] not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but on the principle of equality, that this time your abundance may be for their lack, and that their abundance may be for your lack; so that there should be equality. According as it is written, [f]He who [gathered] much had nothing over, and he who [gathered] little had no lack.

c Phil. 2 6,7.
d 1 Cor. 7. 25.
e ch. 9. 2.
f Ex. 16. 18.

3 (16-24): The apostle's care to be manifested before men as well as before God.

3. But thanks be to God who is putting the same diligent zeal for you in the heart of Titus. For indeed he accepted the entreaty, but being full of zeal, of his own accord he went unto you; and we have sent with him the brother* whose praise is in the gospel throughout

* Luke?

were abounding now in all Christian grace, they would surely abound in this grace too, among the rest.

2. He sets before them the transcendent example of One who was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor to enrich us through His poverty. What an example to keep all other giving in its place, to make it seem as little as it really is, and yet at the same time to make it more acceptable to God by the consciousness of its littleness! The Corinthians had, in fact, manifested their readiness for that of which he was speaking a year before. He had only to urge them, therefore, to carry out what had been in their thoughts so long already, remembering that, as to individual giving, God did not expect from a man what he had not, and He did not mean to ease some by putting burdens upon others. The beautiful example of the manna is that which he sets before them here, where—in a ministry which was from heaven itself and in which men had only to gather that which God had bestowed,—yet "he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack." That was God's thought and desire for them all, but using human instrumentality to accomplish it, and thus binding the hearts of His people to each other, and drawing forth the love, of which the gift, if it were anything, was but the manifestation.

3. The apostle goes on to speak of his care that in the ministration of the "carnal things," as he calls them (which prove themselves so much a temptation to the flesh, and as to which the jealous eyes of enemies would so surely be upon him) there should not be the slightest opportunity given for even a question as to his conduct. It was not enough for him here that God would know all, so that he might leave it to Him to justify him in His own time and way. Where there were means that could be taken to prevent even suspicion he would take them, which even his *not* taking might be in itself a cause of suspicion. It is a principle of importance that we are called to recognize in a man whose faith in God was so pre-eminent, that he would not act simply upon

all the assemblies; and not only so, but who was also [g]chosen of the assemblies as our fellow-traveler with this grace administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself, and for a witness of our readiness. Avoiding this, that any one should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; for we provide for honest things, [h]not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother whom we have oftentimes proved of diligent zeal in many things, and now much more diligently zealous through the great confidence he hath in you. As to Titus, he is my companion and fellow-laborer in your behalf: or our brethren, they are the messengers* of the assemblies and the glory of Christ. Wherefore, show ye to them before the assemblies the proof of your love and of our boasting concerning you.

[g] *cf.* 1 Cor. 16. 3, 4.

[h] Rom. 12. 17.

4 (ix. 1-5): The fear of declension.

4. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know your readiness for which [i]I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia is prepared [j]since a year ago, and the zeal [reported] of you hath roused the mass [of the brethren]. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting of you may not be made void in this respect,—in order that, as I have said, ye might be prepared; lest haply if any of the Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, *we*, that we say not ye, should be put to shame with regard to this confidence. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the breth-

[i] ch. 8. 24.

[j] ch. 8. 10.

* Same word as apostles; so as to Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 25.

this, in a matter of this kind. He would not say here, as in another relation he does say, that with him it was a very small matter to be judged of any. He does not build upon his apostleship, or the undoubted blessing that God had given to his labor, in such a way as to think himself beyond the need of justifying himself by the use of such precautions as would be thought needful in the case of another man. It would rather seem as if the sense of the place he filled in this way only made more imperative the necessity to "provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." He did not, as many lesser men might do, and have done, stand upon the dignity of his office and disdain the thought of any account to be rendered to those before wl om his life had so evidently spoken, tested as he had been by innumerable trials. No, he "magnified his office" in a wholly different way. Thus for this cause also he could be glad of the zeal of others which could lead them to accept readily association with him in this matter of ministry of even "carnal things." And he thinks it right that not only should these be men of the highest character, but also the choice of the assemblies themselves. Of these he can speak in terms of fullest assurance. "They are the messengers of the assemblies," he says, "and the glory of Christ." He would not allow it to be thought that he had covered any defects in the administration either with the cloak of his apostleship or of his personal faith.

4. He goes on to express his anxiety as to them also, that the zeal which they had shown in regard to these things a year before might not be found to have waned, as is so common a case with regard to mere human impulse. Nor would he have it appear, as any unreadiness on their part now might make it, as if their

ren that they would come to you and complete beforehand your bounty before announced, that this may be ready as bounty, and not as covetousness [of ours].

5 (6-15): Principles of divine government.

5. But this [is true], *k* he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth *l* with blessings shall reap also with blessings; every one according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for *m* God loveth a cheerful giver. But *n* God is able to make every gracious gift abound towards you, that ye, having always all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,—according as it is written, *o* He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for the eating, will supply and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; [ye] being enriched in every way to liberality, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. Because the ministration of this service not only supplieth the wants of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; since they glorify God on account of the proof which this ministration giveth of your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your communication towards them and towards all; and in their supplication for you, full of longing for you, on account of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!

k Prov. 11. 24, 25.
l Prov. 22.9. Deut.15.10.
m cf. Ex.25. 2. Matt. 10. 8.
n Phil. 4.19.
o Ps. 112. 9.

boasted zeal, which had stirred so many to action, was after all only the effect of pressure put upon them—of the "covetousness" of the apostle, whether for them or for others.

5. Yet the decline which had been manifest among them in other ways might indeed have easily affected them in this manner also. It would not be therefore in vain for them to remember the sure principles of divine government. Even in nature, he who spared the seed of harvest must expect to find the result in harvest; only, as the harvest here was spiritual, it would not be as if a certain sum paid in would secure a certain amount of interest. There must be heart in it, not a gift grudgingly bestowed, for which God cared not. The apostle longed as to them for such a spiritual state as that the Giver of all good should freely pour out upon them His blessing, and that for this, as well as the fruit of their ministration itself, thanksgivings might every way ascend to God, and the hearts of the saints might in this way also be drawn to one another. These are the perfect ways of God who, whether He gives or whether He withholds, is serving us in giving or withholding. It is grace all through, reminding us ever of how He made us by the consciousness of our primal need to know Himself in the reception of His love's first offer. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!"

Div. 6.

1. The apostle goes on now to meet the difficulties which were manifesting themselves from the spirit of rivalry among those who professedly, at least, were ministers of Christ themselves. He entreats them by that meekness and gentleness of Christ which, with all the positive and supreme claim which He had over His people, and which He never hesitated to enforce, yet nevertheless manifested itself in all His ways towards them. So also will the apostle be lowly among

DIVISION 6. (Chaps. x., xi.)

The overcoming of the difficulties, and of the power of the enemy, which would hinder the work.

1 (x. 1-6): Mighty through God.

1. NOW I Paul myself entreat you by the [p]meekness and gentleness of Christ, who when present indeed am lowly among you, but being absent am bold towards you; but I [q]beseech that I may not be bold when present with the confidence with which I think to be bold against some who think of us as walking according to the flesh. For though we walk in flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the [r]weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the overthrowing of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

[p] Matt. 11. 29.

[q] ch. 13. 2, 10.

[r] Eph. 6. 12, 13. 1 Thess. 5. 8.

2 (7-11): The contradiction of the opposers.

2. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any one trusteth in himself that he is of Christ, let him think this again in himself, that even as he is of Christ so also are we. For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly of our [s]authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed; that I may not seem as if I were frightening you by letters: for his letters, say they,* are weighty and strong, but his

[s] ch. 13. 10.

* Many MSS. have, "saith he."

the people of God and assuming nothing, while able to be bold, nevertheless, with the confidence of what God was working by him. He besought them, however, that he might not have to manifest the boldness which he expected to show against some who were putting him down as walking upon their own level, which was according to the flesh. He walked indeed in flesh, a man like other men, but he maintained no fleshly conflict. The weapons of his warfare were not fleshly, and yet mighty through God to the overthrowing of Satan's power and the strongholds of human pride and reasoning, exalting themselves against the knowledge of God. His aim was not to establish a principle of obedience to himself, but of obedience to Christ, and there he desired to lead captive every thought. All else that would not yield to this in the way of gracious ministry he would be ready to avenge when the spirit of obedience, on the other hand, had been manifested, and those in whom it was were thus separated from the rest.

2. He reasons with them all now, however, as having amongst them those who thus questioned the authority which God had given him. Were they judging by outward appearance, mistaking the lowliness of grace for the consciousness of incapacity? If any one trusted in himself that he was of Christ, let him think this too, that whatever he might be, this the apostle could surely claim; nay, if he were to boast more abundantly of the authority the Lord had given him, he would not be ashamed; but it was for edification, not for destruction, and thus he did not want to seem as if he were frightening them by letters. His adversaries took occasion to assert that while the letters truly were weighty and strong, when the man himself was seen there was not what was corresponding to this. He maintains that just what he was in his letters, so would he manifest

[t] bodily presence is weak, and his [u] speech naught. Let such an one think this,—that such as we are in word by letters when absent, such are we also in deed when present.

[t] *cf.* ch. 12.9.
[u] *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 1, 4.

3 (12-18): The apportionment of God.

3. For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves; but they measuring themselves among themselves, and [v] comparing themselves with themselves, are not intelligent. Now *we* will not boast without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath apportioned to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For it is not as if, not reaching unto you, we stretch ourselves beyond measure; for we came foremost as far as to you also with the gospel of Christ; [w] not boasting out of measure in other men's labors, but having hope, as your faith increaseth, to be enlarged among you, according to our rule, abundantly, to announce the gospel as far as the parts beyond you, not to be boasting in another man's line,* of things made ready to our hands. But [x] he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

[v] 1 Cor. 4.3,4.
[w] *cf.* Rom. 15. 20.
[x] 1 Cor. 1.31.

4 (xi. 1-6): The peril at Corinth.

4. Would that ye could bear with a little folly in me; and indeed bear with me; for I am jealous in regard to you with a jealousy which is of God; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may [y] present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as [z] the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. For if indeed he that cometh preacheth

[y] Eph. 5.27.
[z] Gen. 3. 4.

* κανόνι, same word as "rule."

himself to be when he was present with them. The deed would make good the word. The profession would not be found, as in the case of others it might be, to be beyond the reality.

3. For he did not dare to make himself one of those who were continually commending themselves, people who measured themselves among themselves, and not in the presence of God, or by the results of ministry which God had made apparent. For his own part, he would not imitate this folly, but would go no further than the measure of that which God had apportioned to him; a measure which the Corinthians knew reached even to them, for they themselves were the fruit of what God had done by him. He was not boasting of other men's labors, and he hoped that, with the enlargement of their own faith, the character of his labors would be enlarged also, and indeed that they would thus prepare his way for an announcement of the gospel in the parts beyond themselves, a kind of enlargement which would be indeed according to his desire. In himself he did not desire to glory, but in the Lord; for self-commendation could not approve the one who used it, but the Lord's commendation was the whole matter.

4. Provoked himself to a little of what might be considered this sort of folly, he could trust that they would bear with him. After all, in it was really the jealousy which he had with regard to them as those whom he had espoused to one husband, that he might present them, as it were, a chaste virgin to Christ.

another Jesus whom we preached not, or if ye received a different Spirit, which ye received not, or a [a]different gospel, which ye have not received, ye might well bear with [him]. For I reckon that [b]in nothing I am behind those pre-eminent as apostles; and if I be a simple person in speech, yet not in knowledge; but in every way we have made (this) manifest in all things to you.

5 (7–15): Ways and ends.

5. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself, in order that ye might be exalted, [c]because I preached to you freely the gospel of God? I robbed other assemblies, taking hire from them for ministry towards you; and when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man, for that which was lacking to me the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied; and in everything I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and I will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knoweth. But what I do, I will also do, that I may cut off occasion from those who desire occasion, that wherein they boast they may be found even as we. For such are [d]false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for [e]Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing, therefore, if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

a Gal. 1. 6.
b ch. 12. 11. Gal. 2. 6.
c ch. 12. 13. Acts 18. 3.
d Rev. 2. 2.
e Job 1. 6,9–11. Lk. 22. 31.

He feared lest, as man had been seduced from God at the beginning, so now their minds were being corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. But was there another Jesus than the One he preached, or was there a different Spirit from Him they had received, or was there a different gospel which was truly that? If so, indeed they might well bear with this; but he reckoned that in nothing was he behind, in this respect, those who were pre-eminent as apostles, and if he discarded the excellency or the ornaments of speech, he was not deficient in knowledge, but in every way had made himself manifest in all things to them.

5. Searching around for cause, then, for offence he might have given them, he can only find it possible in his having preached freely to them the gospel of God, taking nothing from them. He had, in fact, at the same time received from other assemblies, as if, as he puts it, he had been hired by others to minister to them; all that was deficient being supplied by those from Macedonia, and his own labor being, as we know, for the most part his own support. Thus he had not been a burden upon them as he might reasonably have been; nor was he going now to be such. There was a special reason for this exceptional conduct, and he was glad at Corinth to be able to boast himself in this respect; but why? For want of love to them? No, but to cut off occasion from those who desired occasion, deceitful workers, who had come in with really apostolic pretensions,—but baseless, and inspired of Satan himself, who could readily transform himself into an angel of light, which once he was, but is not. As the accuser of the brethren, Satan's great plea indeed is righteousness. We see that in his accusation of Job; and his followers were likely enough on his ground to be as false accusers of others as he is. Their end would declare it, but he does not hesitate to speak plainly of what indeed must have been a terrible thing with him, to find those who were the fruit of his own labors thus carried off

6 (16-33): Labors.

6. I say again, let no man think me to be a fool; but if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I too may boast myself some little. That which I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. For ye bear fools readily, *f*seeing ye are wise; for ye bear it if one bring you into bondage, if one devour you, if one take of you, if one exalt himself, if one smite you on the face. I speak by way of disparagement, as though we were weak; but whereinsoever any is bold (I speak foolishly) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as though beside myself), *g*I above measure so. In labors exceedingly abundant, in stripes exceeding, in prisons exceedingly abundant, *h*in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times have I received forty [stripes] save one. Thrice have I been *i*beaten with rods, *j*once was I stoned, three times I have *k*suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from [mine own] countrymen, in perils from the nations, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils on the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; beside those things that are without, that which presseth upon me day by day, the burden of all the assemblies. Who is weak, and *l*I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will *m*glory in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In *n*Damascus the governor under Aretas the king, kept the city of the Damascenes shut up desirous to apprehend me, and through a window in a basket I was let down by the wall and escaped his hands.

f 1 Cor. 4.10.
g 1 Cor. 15. 10.
h 1 Cor. 15. 30-32.
i Acts 16.22.
j Acts 14.19.
k Acts 27. 41.
l 1 Cor. 8.13. 1 Cor. 9.22.
m ch. 12.5,9.
n Acts 9. 24, 25.

away from him. A very great length, it is evident, had things gone in Corinth; and even as yet there was not the thorough deliverance which he counted on for them.

6. He turns unwillingly once more to speak of himself. Fool as they thought him, even as a fool, they who were so wise might listen a little. Foolish indeed boasting was, yet it was a folly to which one might be compelled,—a sorrowful thing that they, of all people, should be compelling him to this. But in what, then, in comparison with others, did he fail? If they were Hebrews, so was he. If they were the seed of Abraham, so was he. Were they ministers of Christ? How thoroughly had he been proved as that! The abundance of his labors spoke for him, the sufferings that these ever brought him into,—stripes and imprisonments, death facing him in every form. The record follows here, a record which far exceeds such history as we have in the Acts, which was indeed but an example of much else. Perils he had met in every form, from enemies, from

DIVISION 7. (Chaps. xii., xiii.)

The perfecting of ministry.

1 (xii. 1-6): The grace given to a man in Christ.

1. WELL, it is not of profit for me to boast, for I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not, or whether out of the body I know not, God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the °third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I know not, God know-

° *cf.* Gen. 1. 8, 16, 17. Heb. 4. 14.

false brethren, from fellow-countrymen, from strangers, amid the concourse of men, in wilderness desolations, in perils from what men call accidents, amid labor and toil, in watchings, in fastings, in cold and nakedness. Amid all this there was that which, for such as he was, was a pressure beyond it all, the burden of all the assemblies. Who was there with whose weakness he did not sympathize? Who was there whose stumbling did not make him burn? But if he gloried, he would glory rather in that which showed him to be the helpless creature that he was, cared for of God as such, but still left to the realization of this helplessness. He mentions but one point here, the ignominious way in which he had to take flight from Damascus, the city being shut up with a garrison to apprehend him, he himself let down from a window in the wall, in a basket, to escape his persecutors,—no miracle intervening for him, as we see, no dignity imparted by such a manner of escape as this; yet how much comfort may we sometimes find in these glimpses of the condition in which might be found so great an apostle as was Paul!

Div. 7.

We are thus introduced to what is no doubt the perfecting of ministry, the way in which, on the one hand and on the other, God is found by the soul thus pledged to His service; on the one hand the heights of blessedness to which the Lord is ready to lead His own, the wondrous comfort yielded to those who have need of comfort; while, on the other hand, we see the need of discipline also found in close connection with the comfort itself, and in such an one as Paul the apostle; and if needed by such an one, who is there that shall claim exemption from it? The effect is that to which the last chapter has in measure already brought us, the abasement of the earthen vessel, only that the excellency of the power may be realized to be of God and not of man, His strength perfected in weakness, so that the weakness itself may be gloried in, and in the consciousness of such weakness one may find strength.

1. The apostle comes now to what it is evident he said little of to others, and which was given for the joy and comfort of his own soul alone. The visions and revelations of the Lord of which he speaks were not intended to be communicated, went beyond even the possibility of communication. They were not, therefore, for others, they were for himself; and yet they are intimated here surely for the blessing of others, and that we may realize what in the same condition one may count upon from the same Lord. Paul was in this pre-eminent, as he always is. We may lose, by insisting too much upon this, all the blessing for ourselves. It is plain that the apostle does not speak of himself here as an apostle. That is not how he puts it. As an apostle, the revelations would, in fact, have been for others. They were not that, but for himself; and he speaks of himself, (for clearly it is of himself that he is speaking,) yet in such terms as would make any Christian his fellow. "I know a man in Christ," he says; but who is there among Christians who is not a man in Christ? We must be careful to note the way in which Scripture presents things to us, or we shall lose very much of the blessing of them. It is "a man in Christ,"—so simply put

eth) how that he was caught up into [p] Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not allowed to man to utter. Of such an one I will glory, but of myself I will not glory, save in [mine] infirmities; for though I should desire to glory, I should not be a fool, for I will say the truth; but I forbear, lest any one should think as to me above that which he seeth me [to be], or that he heareth of me.

[p] Lk. 23. 43. Rev. 2. 7.

that if it were not for what is afterwards said, we might even question whether it were the apostle at all. It is clear that he does not want us to realize these things as simply apostolic. The "man in Christ" is, indeed, in some sense much *more* than the apostle. A "man in Christ" is one who is before God in the value and power of what Christ is for God. The apostle knew this indeed as no one else, one may say, has known it; but that which he knew so well, nevertheless, belongs in its blessedness to every Christian, and is open for every Christian to enjoy it. Let us impute to ourselves what differences there may be, and not escape from the comfort or from the exhortation that there is in it, by making "a man in Christ" really an exception among such men. That cannot be why it is so presented here. If ministry be, as we have seen it is, something which, in one form or another, every member of the body of Christ as such is to exercise; if every member of Christ is needed to fill out that epistle of Christ which the Church is, "read and known of all men," then assuredly we have our part in all that this epistle of ministry can give us, allowing fully for the pre-eminence of the apostle and for all that was really exceptional in him, but which implied, more than anything else, exceptional devotedness.

He speaks then of this man in Christ,—a heavenly man, because Christ is heavenly,—taken up into his own sphere, in heaven, in a marvelous way, of which he can give no account. Whether it was in the body, he knows not. Whether it was out of the body, he knows not. He says this twice, for a purpose doubtless. He would have us not think upon the circumstances so much, upon the exact part that miracle had to do with it; for from the miraculous we naturally seek to withdraw ourselves, (*we* do not expect miracles,) but he leaves it open. He was caught away to the third heaven, whether in body or in spirit he cannot really tell. He thought, perhaps, but little of himself, drawn out of himself as he was by the power of what was communicated to him. It was a joy indeed beyond expression, the Paradise of God, which was somehow opened to him, something which had value and power for his soul, which he could not even utter to others.

Here is the man to glory in, he says; and he separates this man, as it were, from himself, the man in the flesh, who can glory only in his infirmities. How plainly it seems that he would have us separate what he was himself from this wondrous vision given to him! It seems as if he would designedly have us separate all that was exceptional in him from this which is yet in itself so exceptional to all experiences. But would he not open the door thus to us, as far as he could open it? Would he not say, I a man in Christ, as such, was caught up to the third heaven? "Such an one." How many of us could except ourselves from this, and say we are not *such?* We are not Christians at all if that be not true of us. Such an one as this was caught up to the third heaven. Would not God draw our hearts after such unspeakable blessedness, and would He not satisfy hearts that He had thus taught to long after it? "He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." How good if only we longed with an irrepressible longing for that which God must needs come in to satisfy!

But indeed we must not separate the man that Paul was in another sense from the vision which he enjoyed. We may separate the *apostle*, but we must not separate the man devoted to Christ; the man who, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, walked so really in Him; the man for whom earth was marked by the

2 (7–10): A messenger of Satan made to serve.

2. And that I might not be exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelation, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a [q]messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I might not be exalted. For this I besought the Lord [r]thrice, that it might depart from me; and he said unto me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for [my]* [s]power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may abide upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

q Lk. 13. 16. cf. 1Cor. 5. 5.
r cf. Matt. 26. 44.
s ch. 4. 7.

* Many omit.

cross, and to whom therefore, heaven was open. Let us lay all possible emphasis upon such things as this. There is no royal way into the enjoyment of such things by a mere desire to have visions. The way is only by the way Paul really entered. We are right in believing that there was something exceptional about him. We are wrong in believing that it was a mere official distinction, as one may say; something, therefore, which separates us in kind from the man who enjoyed these things. It was the man who himself, in the joy of what he was in Christ, sought with his whole heart to present every man perfect in that same Christ whom he enjoyed. It was this man whom God caught somehow away into Paradise, and made him hear unspeakable things, the joy of which remained, however too deep for utterance. But we are immediately reminded now, that after all here was a man, upon another side, very like ourselves; a man who, if he looked at himself, could glory only in those infirmities which left him the weak creature that he was, in the hands of a God almighty for him. He does not now want to glorify himself with these revelations. He desires none to think of him above that which he sees him really to be, or hears about him.

2. He discloses to us the other Paul of whom he would not glory. He lets us know, in fact, that it was himself who had received the revelation, only in the same sentence in which he makes known to us a thorn in the flesh which the very revelation itself obtained for him. How absolute a rebuke to everything that men dream of practical perfection in the Christian, to find that one who could be caught up where perhaps no one of us has ever been, unconscious of himself while thus occupied with unutterable things, yet had need when he came out of the vision to have a messenger of Satan himself made a help to him, because of the tendency to pride of heart which the very vision might engender! Let us notice carefully that it is not said that he *had* been exalted by it. It was for no actual sin of his own that the messenger of Satan had to buffet him. It was simply because of that which was yet in him, whether exhibited or not,—of tendencies which might be checked, but which needed checking. Thus the thorn in the flesh followed the vision. It is evident, also, that this implied some bodily weakness, or deformity, which might make him little in the eyes of men, thus lowering him in the very character of a minister of Christ which the vision might be implied to nerve him for the more. It is in this way that he goes to the Lord, that is, to Christ, the Lord of the servant, to seek Him about it. Thrice he beseeches Him that this might depart from him. He is answered, and yet he is not answered. He is answered, not as he expects, but he is answered in a fuller way than he expects. The thorn is not removed, but the sufficiency of divine grace is what is assured him, and that, after all, the power of God requires but this human weakness, and is displayed the more as the weakness itself is displayed. This is, as we know, but the good of that earthen vessel in which he has already told us the divine treasure is. Here was the light of heaven itself in a vessel manifestly of earth. He must accept this position. He should

3 (11–15): The signs and the spirit of an apostle.

3. I have become a fool: ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended by you; for [t]in nothing have I been behind those who were pre-eminently apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, signs, and wonders and mighty works. For in what is it that ye have been inferior to other assemblies, unless it be that I myself was not burdensome? Forgive me this wrong. Behold, this [u]third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome; for I seek not yours but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Now I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls, if even though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

[t] ch. 11. 5.

[u] ch. 13. 1. *cf.* ch. 1. 15.

find it no loss. Nay, is it not gain when a man can glory in the very infirmities that he would just now have had taken away, as realizing that they do but cause a power greater than his own to rest upon him? Who would exchange the power of Christ for the power of plausible human appearance, an eloquence of human words, or anything, in short, which would be so simply human as these are? Think of the power of Christ making itself manifest in the simplest words, perhaps, that human lips could utter! Think of divine power manifesting itself in one who to man's eyes was weak almost to contempt!

Of course, the infirmities here that he can glory in imply no moral imperfection. In such a thing as this he could not glory. He goes on to tell us directly what it is that he takes pleasure in, "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits for Christ's sake,"—whatever made him, in fact, manifestly but an earthen vessel, wrote death upon the man Paul, in order that the life of Jesus might exhibit itself in its full divine character. It is a hard lesson to learn, but the very hardness of learning it only shows the more how necessary a lesson it is to learn. Why is it so hard a thing for us to learn it, except just for this tendency to pride of heart in us, to which, as we see, even the great apostle here was not a stranger? How thankful should we be for the discipline, in this way, which makes so little of us, but only to exalt and glorify God through us! The apostle, at any rate, accepted this thoroughly. To suppose, as people have supposed, that the thorn *was* taken away finally by the importunity of his request is to do away with the lesson we are meant to learn by it. To take away the thorn would have been to take away the glorying in it. How wonderful to be the one in whom divine glory had thus chosen to manifest itself! and such was not only Paul, but such clearly is every man in Christ. There is no exception in all this, except, alas, the exception made by our own dullness and slowness to receive the blessing which the man in Christ will find from God, just in proportion as he is really out and out that which is implied in it.

3. The apostle returns, for a moment, to exhibit, as it were, once more that folly of his which became something else in the end for which he used it, but for which he was compelled to use it, as he says here. He could not give way, in the presence of those who sought designedly to lower him that they might exalt themselves. He owns that he is nothing; yet, as we see, that could not hinder the signs of an apostle being wrought among them through him. They belonged well to one who came amongst the Corinthians with fear and trembling because of the burden of the message that he carried, because of the testimony to Christ His Saviour which was in it. With such an one the signs of an apostle were in perfect harmony, wrought among them, as he says, first of all in all patience, giving the moral quality first, but in signs also, wondrous and mighty works. There was nothing, then, in which they had been inferior to other

4 (16-21): But danger still.

4. But be it so: *I* did not burden you; but being crafty I caught you with guile! Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I besought Titus, and with him I sent the brother. Did Titus make a gain of you at all? Walked we not in the same spirit, [walked we] not in the same steps? For a long time ye have been thinking that we are excusing ourselves to you. We speak before God in Christ, and all things, beloved, for your edifying. For I fear lest, perhaps, when I come, I find you not such as I would, and that *I* may be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be strifes, emulations, wrath, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; lest when I come again my God should humble me with regard to you, and that I shall bewail many who have sinned before, and have not repented as to the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have practised.

5 (xiii.): The end of exercise.

5. This third time I am coming to you. [v]In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be established. I told you before and foretell you, as if I were

[v] Deut. 19. 15.

assemblies, except in that independence of them which he might seem to have manifested. If that were a wrong, they must forgive it to him. For him it was the independence only of a parent who sought the welfare of his children, rather than to be ministered to by them. "For the children," he says, tenderly, "ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children," and he, how gladly would he spend and be spent for the souls of those he loved, even though the love that he poured out upon them might but deprive him in measure of the love they gave him.

4. The attacks made upon him went further, even, than this. Some were saying, it is evident, that even in thus not burdening them there was an element of deception,—he did not himself burden them, nevertheless it was only in the craft of one who knew how to catch them with guile. It is strange that any can plead such a sentence as being an argument for guile being rightly employed by a Christian. It is the thing that he is charged with that he is speaking of here, and the thing which he immediately repels by the questions following. Had he shown his guile, then, by making a gain of them by means of others sent, that gain which personally he would not make? Titus had been sent by him and a brother in his company. Had Titus then made a gain of them? Had they not walked in the same spirit and in the same steps also? They were even thinking, some among them, that all this defence of himself was merely excuse made by a conscience that was not at ease. "We speak," he says, "before God in Christ; and all things, beloved, for your edifying." But the condition of things even yet made him fear sometimes as to those that he would find in such a condition as would humble him with regard to them and make them suffer from the rod he brought. He feared the presence of "strifes, emulations, wrath, contentions, evil speakings, whisperings," and that he might have to bewail many who had already sinned, and who had not, as others had, repented with regard to the immorality, the open outbreaks of the flesh which had been manifested amongst them.

5. Now, at last, at any rate, he was coming to them. Everything would be looked at, and in the mouth of two or three witnesses everything be established. Love itself, while it has no limit, yet can be forced to act in a way contrary to its desire. If he came again he would not spare. They were questioning his

present the second time, and now absent, to those that have sinned before and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me (who towards you is not weak, but is mighty in you,—for if indeed he hath been crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; for indeed we are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you) [w]examine your own selves if *ye* be in the faith, prove your own selves. Do ye not recognize yourselves that [x]Jesus Christ is in you, except indeed ye be reprobates? Now I trust that ye shall know that *we* are not reprobates; but we pray to God that ye do no evil, not that *we* may appear approved, but that *ye* may do what is right, though *we* be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and ye are strong; and this also we pray for, [y]your perfecting. Therefore, I write these things, being absent, that being present I may not [z]use severity according to the authority which the Lord hath given me for edification, and not for destruction.

w 1 Cor. 9.2.

x Rom. 8. 9, 10.

y Col. 1. 28.

z ch. 10. 8.

apostleship, and questioning whether Christ had been speaking in him. Why did they not look at themselves if they wanted proof of that? Were they not sufficient proof? Had they not indeed evidence of the power of God in that which had been wrought, not merely amongst them, but in them? For they came behind in no gift. Whatever weakness might have been exhibited, it was a Christ crucified he preached, crucified through weakness, yet He lived now by the power of God. So too His ministers might be weak after His pattern, yet the power of God manifested in them through Him by whom they lived before God. But if they wanted a proof, then, of the apostle's workmanship, *they* were his workmanship. Let them examine themselves if they were in the faith. Let them prove themselves instead of him.

The want of understanding the long parenthesis here, which is, after all, in the apostle's manner, has made people think that Paul intended them really to examine themselves if they were in the faith. On the contrary, his argument is based upon the very fact that they need not and could not do it. He turns immediately to them with the question: "Do ye not recognize yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, except indeed ye be reprobates?" If everything was gone, their profession and all that was implied in it, then indeed his work was gone, and the proof of his apostleship, as far as they were concerned, would be truly wanting. But he himself, at any rate, and those who had labored amongst them, were not reprobates; and they only prayed that His people might do no evil, not that they themselves might appear approved, but that they might do right, even though they might be reprobating their teachers.

After all, nothing could be really done against the truth—nothing could prevail against that—but for the truth. We must be on the other side of things, with God, in order to realize how truly this is so; but it is so, and the apostle in his devoted love towards them could rejoice if they were strong indeed, however weak he might be manifested. What he sought and prayed for was their perfecting, and his object now in writing was that he might not have to come amongst them to use a severity which indeed could be justified in the authority which the Lord had given him; an authority, nevertheless, meant for building up and not for pulling down. In all this we see the heart of true ministry, as is manifest,—the self-forgetfulness of a love that poured itself out because it was love; not for any gain, except indeed what love could count gain.

Finally, brethren, rejoice. Be perfected; be of good comfort; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and [a]peace shall be with you. [b]Greet one another with a holy kiss. [c]All the saints salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the [d]communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

a Rom. 15 33.
b Rom. 16 16.
c Phil. 4. 22
d Phil. 2. 1

Through all, let them rejoice. Joy is what becomes us, whatever the circumstances may be, and even in the very consciousness of failure itself; but the true Christian joy is in the Lord, and that should not fail or vary. Let them rejoice, then, and with that seek in all things perfection. Let them be of good comfort, of one mind, which could only therefore be the mind of Christ, if it were to be the mind of Christians. Let them be at peace; and He who was the God of love and peace would be with them. He bids them salute one another, and sends the salutation of the saints, praying that the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit might be with them all.